THE PHILOSOPHY

OF THE

MORAL FEELINGS.

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BY

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PREFACE.

In a former work, the Author endeavoured to delineate, in a simple and popular form, the leading facts relating to the Intellectual Powers, and to trace the principles which ought to guide us in the Investigation of Truth. The volume, which he now offers to the public attention, is intended as a sequel to these Inquiries; and his object in it is to investigate, in the same unpretending manner, the Moral Feelings of the Human Mind, and the principles which ought to regulate our volitions and our conduct as moral and responsible beings. The two branches of investigation are, in many respects, closely connected; and, on this account, it may often happen, that, in the present work, principles are assumed as admitted or proved, which, in the former, were stated at length, with the evidence by which they are supported.

CONTENTS.

PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS

SECTION I.

NATURE AND IMPORTANCE OF THE SCIENCE OF THE MORAL FEELINGS.

SECTION II.

FIRST TRUTHS IN THE SCIENCE OF THE MORAL FEELINGS.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE MORAL FEELINGS

PART I.

THE DESIRES—THE AFFECTIONS—AND SELF-LOVE.

SECTION I.

SECTION II.

SECTION III.

PART II.

PART III.

APPENDIX TO PART III.

PART IV.

OF THE MORAL RELATION OF MAN TOWARDS THE DEITY . 199



PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS.

SECT. I.

NATURE AND IMPORTANCE OF THE SCIENCE OF THE MORAL FEELINGS.

MAN is to be contemplated as an intellectual, and as a moral being. By his intellectual powers, he acquires the knowledge of facts, observes their connexions, and traces the conclusions which arise out of them. These mental operations, however, even in a high state of cultivation, may be directed entirely to truths of an extrinsic kind,—that is, to such as do not exert any influence either on the moral condition of the individual, or on his relations to other sentient beings. They may exist in an eminent degree in the man who lives only for himself, and feels little beyond the

personal wants or the selfish enjoyments of the hour that is passing over him.

But, when we contemplate man as a moral being, new relations open on our view which present considerations of mightier import. We find him occupying a place in a great system of moral government, in which he has an important station to fill and high duties to perform. We find him placed in certain relations to a great moral Governor, who presides over this system of things, and to a future state of being for which the present scene is intended to prepare him. We find him possessed of powers which qualify him to feel these relations, and of principles calculated to guide him through the solemn responsibilities which attend his state of moral discipline.

These two parts of his mental constitution we perceive to be remarkably distinct from each other. The former may be in vigorous exercise in him, who has little feeling of his moral condition;—and the latter may be in a high state of culture in the man, who, in point of intellectual acquirement, knows little beyond the truths which it most concerns him to know,—those great but simple principles which guide his conduct as a responsible being.

In a well-regulated mind, these two departments of the mental economy must harmonize and co-operate with each other. Knowledge, received through the powers of sensation and simple intellect, whether relating to external things, or to mental phenomena,—and conclusions derived from these through the powers of reasoning, ought all to contribute to that which is the highest state of man,—his purity as a moral being. They ought all to lend their aid towards the cultivation of those principles of his nature which bind him to his fellow-men;—and those higher principles still, which raise his feeble powers to the Eternal Incomprehensible One, the first great cause of all things, and the moral governor of the universe.

A slight degree of observation is sufficient to convince us, that such a regulated condition of the mental constitution does not exist in the generality of mankind. It is not my present purpose to inquire into the causes by which this is primarily deranged; but it may be interesting to trace some of the circumstances which bear a part in producing the derangement. In our present state of being, we are surrounded with objects of sense; and the mind is kept, in a great degree, under the influence of external things.

In this manner it often happens, that facts and considerations elude our attention, and deeds escape from our memory, in a manner which would not occur, were the mind left at liberty to recall its own associations, and to feel the influence of principles which are really part of the mental constitution. It is thus, that, amid the bustle of life, the attention is apt to be engrossed by considerations of a local and an inferior character;—while facts and motives of the highest moment are overlooked, and deeds of our own, long gone by, escape from our remembrance. We thus lose a correct sense of our moral condition, and yield to the agency of present and external things, in a manner disproportioned to their real value. For our highest concern as moral beings is with things future, and things unseen; and often with circumstances in our own moral history, long past, and perhaps forgotten. Hence the benefit of retirement and calm reflection, and of every thing that tends to withdraw us from the impression of sensible objects, and that leads us to feel the superiority of things which are not seen. Under such influence, the mind displays an astonishing power of recalling the past and grasping the future,—and of viewing objects in their true relations to itself,

and to each other. The first of these, indeed, we see exemplified in many affections, in which the mind is cut off, in a greater or less degree, from its intercourse with the external world, by causes acting upon the bodily organization. In another work I have described many remarkable examples of the mind, in this condition, recalling its old impressions respecting things long past and entirely forgotten; and the facts there stated call our attention in a very striking manner to its inherent powers and its independent existence.

This subject is one of intense interest, and suggests reflections of the most important kind, respecting the powers and properties of the thinking principle. In particular, it leads us to a period which we are taught to anticipate even by the inductions of intellectual science, when, the bodily frame being dissolved, the thinking and reasoning essence shall exercise its peculiar faculties in a higher state of being. There are facts in the mental phenomena which give a high degree of probability to the conjecture, that the whole transactions of life, with the motives and moral history of each individual, may be recalled by a process of the mind itself, and placed, as at a single glance, distinctly before him.

Were we to realize such a mental condition, we should not fail to contemplate the impressions so recalled, with feelings very different from those by which we are apt to be misled amid the influence of present and external things.—The tumult of life is over;—pursuits, principles, and motives, which once bore an aspect of importance, are viewed with feelings more adapted to their true value.—The moral principle recovers that authority, which, amid the contests of passion, had been obscured or lost;—each act and each emotion is seen in its relations to the great dictates of truth, and each pursuit of life in its real bearing on the great concerns of a moral being;—and the whole assumes a character of new and wondrous import, when viewed in relation to that Incomprehensible One, who is then disclosed in all his attributes as a moral governor. —Time past is contracted into a point, and that the infancy of being;—time to come is seen expanding into eternal existence.

Such are the views which open on him who would inquire into the essence by which man is distinguished as a rational and moral being. Compared with it, what are all the phenomena of nature,—what is all the history of the world,

—the rise and fall of empires,—or the fate of those who rule them. These derive their interest from local and transient relations,—but this is to exist for ever. That science, therefore, must be considered as the highest of all human pursuits, which contemplates man in his relation to eternal things. With its importance, we must feel its difficulties; and, did we confine the investigation to the mere principles of natural science, we should feel these difficulties to be insurmountable. But, in this great inquiry, we have two sources of knowledge, to which nothing analogous is to be found in the history of physical science, and which will prove infallible guides, if we resign ourselves to their direction with sincere desire to discover the truth. These are—the light of conscience,—and the light of divine revelation. In making this statement, I am aware that I tread on delicate ground,—and that some will consider an appeal to the sacred writings as a departure from the strict course of philosophical inquiry. This opinion, I am satisfied, is entirely at variance with truth;—and, in every moral investigation, if we take the inductions of sound philosophy, along with the dictates of conscience and the light of revealed truth, we shall find them to constitute one uniform and harmo-

nious whole, the various parts of which tend, in a remarkable manner, to establish and illustrate each other. If, indeed, in any investigation in moral science, we disregard the light which is furnished by the sacred writings, we resemble an astronomer who should rely entirely on his unaided sight, and reject those optical inventions which extend so remarkably the field of his vision, as to be to him the revelation of things not seen. Could we suppose a person thus entertaining doubts respecting the knowledge supplied by the telescope, yet proceeding in a candid manner to investigate its truth, he would perceive in the telescopic observations themselves principles developed which are calculated to remove his suspicions. For, in the limited knowledge which is furnished by vision alone, he finds difficulties which he cannot explain, apparent inconsistencies which he cannot reconcile, and insulated facts which he cannot refer to any known principle. But, in the more extended knowledge which the telescope yields, these difficulties disappear; facts are brought together which seemed unconnected or discordant; and the universe appears one beautiful system of order and consistency. It is the same in the experience of the moral inquirer, when he extends his

views beyond the inductions of reason, and corrects his conclusions by the testimony of God. Discordant principles are brought together; doubts and difficulties disappear; and beauty, order, and harmony are seen to pervade the government of the Deity. In this manner there also arises a species of evidence for the doctrines of revelation, which is entirely independent of the external proofs of its divine origin; and which, to the candid mind, invests it with all the characters of authenticity and truth.

From these combined sources of knowledge, thus illustrating and confirming each other, we are enabled to attain, in moral inquiries, a degree of certainty adapted to their high importance. We do so, when, with sincere desire to discover the truth, we resign ourselves to the guidance of the light which is within, aided as it is by that light from heaven which shines upon the path of the humble inquirer. Cultivated on these principles, the science is fitted to engage the most powerful mind, while it will impart strength to the most common understanding. It terminates in no barren speculations, but tends directly to promote peace on earth, and good will among men. It is calculated both to enlarge the understanding, and to elevate and pu-

rify the feelings, and thus to cultivate the moral being for the life which is to come. It spreads forth to the view as a course which becomes smoother and brighter the farther it is pursued; and the rays which illuminate the path converge in the throne of him who is eternal.

SECT. II.

OF FIRST TRUTHS IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE MORAL FEELINGS.

The knowledge which we receive through our intellectual powers is referable to two classes. These may be distinguished by the names of acquired knowledge, and intuitive or fundamental articles of belief. The former is procured by the active use of our mental powers, in collecting facts, tracing their relations, and observing the deductions which arise out of particular combinations of them. These constitute the operations which I have referred to in another work, under the heads of processes of investigation, and processes of reasoning. The full exercise of them requires a certain culture of the

mental faculties, and consequently is confined to a comparatively small number of men. We perceive, however, that such culture is not essential to every individual,—for many are very deficient in it who yet are considered as persons of sound mind, and capable of discharging their duties in various situations of life in a creditable and useful manner.

But the knowledge which we derive from the other source is of immediate and essential importance to men of every degree; and, without it, no individual could engage, with confidence, in any of the common transactions of life, or make any provision for his protection or comfort, or even for the continuance of his existence. These are the principles also treated of, in a former work, under the name of First Truths. They are not, like our knowledge of the other kind, the result of any process either of investigation or of reasoning; and for the possession of them no man either depends upon his own observation, or has recourse to that of other men. They are a part of his mental constitution, arising, with a feeling of absolute certainty, in every sound mind; and, while they admit of no proof by processes of reasoning, sophistical objections brought against them can be combated only by an ap-

peal to the consciousness of every man, and to the absolute conviction which forces itself upon the whole mass of mankind.

If the Creator has thus implanted in the mind of man principles to guide him in his intellectual and physical relations, independently of any acquired knowledge, we might naturally expect to find him endowed, in the same manner, with principles adapted to his more important relations as a moral being. We might naturally expect, that, in these high concerns, he would not be left to the chance of knowledge which he might casually receive either through his own powers of investigation or reasoning, or through instruction received from other men. Impressions adapted to this important end we accordingly find developed in a remarkable manner,—and they are referable to that part of our constitution which holds so important a place in the philosophy of the mind, by which we perceive differences in the moral aspect of actions, and approve or disapprove of them as right or wrong. The convictions derived from this source seem to occupy the same place in the moral system, that first truths, or intuitive articles of belief, do in the intellectual. Like them, also, they

admit of no direct proofs by processes of reasoning; and, when sophistical arguments are brought against them, the only true answer consists in an appeal to the conscience of every uncontaminated mind. This is a consideration of the utmost practical importance; and it will probably appear that many well intended arguments, respecting the first principles of moral truth, have been inconclusive, in the same manner as were attempts to establish first truths by processes of reasoning,—because the line of argument adopted in regard to them was one of which they are not susceptible. The force of this analogy is in no degree weakened by the fact, that there is, in many cases, an apparent difference between that part of our mental constitution, on which is founded our conviction of first truths, and that principle from which is derived our impression of moral truth:—For the former continues the same in every mind which is neither obscured by idiocy nor distorted by insanity; but the moral feelings become obscured by a process of the mind itself, by which it has gradually gone astray from rectitude. Hence the difference we find in the decisions of different men, respecting moral truth, arising from peculiarities in their own mental condition;—and

hence that remarkable obscuration of mind at which some men at length arrive, by which the judgment is entirely perverted respecting the first great principles of moral purity. When, therefore, we appeal to certain principles in the mental constitution, as the source of our first impressions of moral truth, our appeal is made chiefly to a mind which is neither obscured by depravity, nor bewildered by the refinements of a false philosophy :—it is made to a mind, in which conscience still holds some degree of its rightful authority, and in which there is a sincere and honest desire to discover the truth. These two elements of character must go together in every sound inquiry in moral science ; and, to a man in an opposite condition, we should no more appeal in regard to the principles of moral truth, than we should take from the fatuous person or the maniac our test of those first principles of intellectual truth, which are allowed to be original elements of belief in every sound mind.

To remedy the evils arising from this diversity and distortion of moral perception, is one of the objects of divine revelation. By means of it there is introduced a fixed and uniform standard of moral truth ; but, it is of importance to remark, that, for the authority of this, an appeal is

made to principles in the mind itself, and that every part of it challenges the assent of the man in whom conscience has not lost its power in the mental economy.

Keeping in view the distinction which has now been referred to, it would appear, that the first principles of moral truth, which are impressed upon the mind as a part of its original constitution, or arise in it by the most simple process of reflection, are chiefly the following.

I. A deep impression of continued existence,—or of a state of being beyond the present *life*,—and of that as a state of moral retribution.

II. A conviction of the existence and superintendence of a great moral Governor of the universe,—a being of infinite perfection and infinite purity. The belief in this Being, as the great first cause, arises, as we have formerly seen, by a simple step of reasoning, from a survey of the works of nature, taken in connexion with the First Truth, that every event must have an adequate cause. Our sense of his moral attributes is fixed with a conviction of equal certainty, upon the conscience or moral feelings. The impression, indeed, of the existence of one supreme and ruling intelligence is found in every age of

the world, and among every class of mankind. Of the "summum illud atque eternum," of the ancient philosophy, and of God as he is revealed in the oracles of truth, certain essential attributes are the same,—infinite power and wisdom, and eternal existence. The ancient sages rose to sublime conceptions of his nature, while they felt the imperfection of their knowledge, and longed after a light which might guide them to himself; and it is striking to remark a similar feeling in a very different state of society, in our own day. "I believe," said an African chief to one of the Missionaries, "I believe there is a God who made all things,—who gives prosperity, sickness and death,—but I do not know him."

III. A conviction of certain duties of justice, veracity, and benevolence, which every man owes to his fellow-men;—and an intuitive perception of the nature and quality of actions as right or wrong, independently of all the consequences resulting from them either to the individual himself or to other men. Every man, in his own case, again, expects the same offices from others; and, on this reciprocity of feeling, is founded the precept which is felt to be one of universal application,—to do to others as we would that they should do to us.

IV. An impression of moral responsibility,—or a conviction, that, for the due performance of these offices, man is responsible to the moral Governor of the universe; and farther, that to this Being he owes, more immediately, a certain homage of the moral feelings, entirely distinct from the duties of relative morality which he owes to his fellow-men.

The consideration of these important objects of belief will afterwards occur to us in various parts of our inquiry. They are stated here in reference to the place which they hold as First Truths, or intuitive articles of moral belief, lying at the foundation of those principles which are fixed in the conscience of the mass of mankind. For the truth of them we appeal not to any process of reasoning, but to the conviction which forces itself upon every regulated mind. Neither do we go abroad among savage nations, to inquire whether the impression of them be universal; for this may be obscured in communities, as it is in individuals, by a course of moral degradation. We appeal to the casuist himself, whether, in the calm moment of reflection, he can divest himself of their power. We appeal to the feelings of the man who, under the consciousness of guilt,

shrinks from the dread of a present Deity, and the anticipation of a future reckoning. But chiefly we appeal to the conviction of him, in whom conscience retains its rightful supremacy, and who habitually cherishes these momentous truths, as his guides in this life in its relation to the life that is to come.

It appears to be a point of the utmost practical importance, that we should consider these articles of belief as implanted in our moral constitution, or as arising by the most simple step of reasoning or reflection out of principles which form a part of that constitution. It is in this way only that we can consider them as calculated to influence the mass of mankind. For, if we do not believe them to arise, in this manner, by the spontaneous exercise of every incorrupted mind, there are only two methods by which we can suppose them to originate;—the one is a direct revelation from the Deity,—the other is a process of reasoning or of investigation, properly so called, analogous to that by which we acquire the knowledge of any principle in natural science. We cannot believe that they are derived entirely from revelation, because we find the belief existing where no revelation is known, and because we find the sacred writers appealing to them as

sources of conviction existing in the mental constitution of every man. There is an obvious absurdity, again, in supposing that principles, which are to regulate the conduct of responsible beings, should be left to the chance of being unfolded by processes of reasoning, in which different minds may arrive at different conclusions, and in regard to which many are incapable of following out any argument at all. What is called the argument *a priori* for the existence and attributes of the Deity, for instance, conveys little that is conclusive to most minds, and to many is entirely incomprehensible. The same observation may be applied to those well-intended and able arguments, by which the probability of a future state is shewn from analogy and from the constitution of the mind. These are founded chiefly on three considerations,—the tendency of virtue to produce happiness, and of vice to be followed by misery,—the unequal distribution of good and evil in the present life,—and the adaptation of our moral faculties to a state of being very different from that in which we are at present placed. There is much in these arguments calculated to elevate our conceptions of our condition as moral beings, and of that future state of existence for which we are

destined; and there is much scope for the highest powers of reasoning, in showing the accordance of these truths with the soundest inductions of true philosophy. But, notwithstanding all their truth and all their utility, it may be doubted whether they are to any one the foundation of his faith in another state of being. It must be admitted, at least, that their force is felt by those only whose minds have been in some degree trained to habits of reasoning, and that they are therefore not adapted to the mass of mankind. But the truths which they are intended to establish are of eternal importance to men of every degree, and we should therefore expect them to rest upon evidence which finds its way with unerring aim to the hearts of the unlearned. The unanswerable reasonings of Butler never reached the ear of the gray-haired pious peasant; but he needs not their powerful aid to establish his sure and certain hope of a blessed immortality. It is no induction of logic that has transfixed the heart of the victim of deep remorse, when he withers beneath an influence unseen by human eye, and shrinks from the anticipation of a reckoning to come. In both, the evidence is within,—a part of the original constitution of every rational mind, planted there by him who framed the won-

drous fabric. This is the power of conscience;—with an authority, which no man can put away from him, it pleads at once for his own future existence, and for the moral attributes of an omnipotent and ever-present Deity. In a healthy state of the moral feelings, the man recognises its claim to supreme dominion. Amid the degradation of guilt, it still raises its voice and asserts its right to govern the whole man; and, though its warnings are disregarded, and its claims disallowed, it proves within his inmost soul an accuser that cannot be stilled, and an avenging spirit that never is quenched.

Similar observations apply to the uniformity of moral distinctions, or the conviction of a certain line of conduct which man owes to his fellow-men. There have been many controversies and various contending systems in reference to this subject; but I submit that the question may be disposed of in the same manner as the one now mentioned. Certain fixed and defined principles of relative duty appear to be recognised by the consent of mankind, as an essential part of their moral constitution, by as absolute a conviction as that by which are recognised our bodily qualities. The hardened criminal, whose life has been a series of injustice and fraud, when

at length brought into circumstances which expose him to the knowledge or the retribution of his fellow-men, expects from them veracity and justice, or perhaps even throws himself upon their mercy. He thus recognises such principles as a part of the moral constitution, just as the blind man, when he has missed his way, asks direction of the first person he meets,—presuming upon the latter possessing a sense which, though lost to him, he still considers as belonging to every sound man. In defending himself, also, the criminal shows the same recognition. For, his object is to disprove the alleged facts, or to frame excuses for his conduct;—he never attempts to question those universal principles by which he feels that his actions must be condemned, if the facts are proved against him. Without such principles, indeed, thus universally recognised, it is evident that the whole system of human things would go into confusion and ruin. Human laws may restrain or punish gross acts of violence and injustice; but they can never provide for numberless methods by which a man may injure his neighbour, or promote his own interest at the expense of others. There are, in fact, but a very few cases which can be provided for by any human institution; it is a principle within

that regulates the whole moral economy. In its extent and importance, when compared with all the devices of man, it may be likened to those great principles which guide the movements of the universe, contrasted with the contrivances by which men produce particular results for their own convenience;—and one might as well expect to move a planet by machinery, or propel a comet by the power of steam, as to preserve the semblance of order in the moral world, without those fundamental principles of rectitude which form a part of the original constitution of every rational being.

Farther, as each man has the consciousness of these principles in himself, he has the conviction that similar principles exist in others. Hence arises the impression, that, as he judges of their conduct by his own moral feelings, so will they judge of him by corresponding feelings in themselves. In this manner is produced that reciprocity of moral impression, by which a man feels the opinion of his fellow-men to be either a reward or a punishment; and hence also springs that great rule of relative duty, which teaches us to do to others as we would that they should do to us. This uniformity of moral feeling and affection even proves a check

upon those who have subdued the influence of these feelings in themselves. Thus a man who has thrown off all sense of justice, compassion, or benevolence, is still kept under a certain degree of control by the conviction of these impressions existing in those by whom he is surrounded. There are indeed men in the world, as has been remarked by Butler, in whom this appears to be the only restraint to which their conduct is subjected.

Upon the whole, therefore, there seems to be ground for assuming, that the articles of belief, which have been the subject of the preceding observations, are primary principles of our moral constitution; and that they correspond with those elements in our intellectual economy, which are commonly called First Truths,—principles which are now universally admitted to require no other evidence than the conviction which forces itself upon every sound understanding.

PHILOSOPHY

OF

THE MORAL FEELINGS.

When we analyse the principles which distinguish man as a moral being, our attention is first directed to his actions, as the external phenomena by which we judge of his internal principles. It is familiar to every one, however, that the same action may proceed from very different motives, and that, when we have the means of estimating motives or principles, it is from these that we form our judgment respecting the moral condition of the individual, and not from his actions alone. When we consider separately the elements which enter into the economy of an intelligent and responsible agent, they seem to resolve themselves into the following :—

I. His actual conduct, or actions.

II. In determining his conduct, the immediate principle is his will, or simple volition. He wills some act,—and the act follows of course, unless it be prevented by restraint from without, or by physical inability to perform it. These alone can interfere with a man following the determination of his will, or simple volition.

III. The objects of will or simple volition are referable to two classes,—objects to be obtained,—and actions to be performed to others;—and these are connected with two distinct mental conditions, which exist previously to the act of volition. In regard to objects to be obtained, this mental condition is *Desire*;—in regard to actions towards others, it is *Affection*. The desires and affections, therefore, hold a place in the mind previous to volition. From one of them originates the mental state which, under certain regulations, leads to volition, or to our willing a certain act. The act, which is then the result of the volition, consists either in certain efforts towards attaining the object desired,—or in certain conduct towards other men, arising out of our affections or mental feelings towards them. The desires and affections, therefore, may be considered as the primary or moving powers,

from which our actions proceed. In connexion with them we have to keep in view another principle, which has an extensive influence on our conduct in regard to both these classes of emotions. This is *Self-love*;—which leads us to seek our own protection, comfort, and advantage. It is a sound and legitimate principle of action when kept in its proper place;—when allowed to usurp an undue influence, it degenerates into selfishness; and it then interferes in a material degree with the exercise of the affections, or, in other words, with our duty to other men.

IV. We have next to attend to the fact, that every desire is not followed by actual volition towards obtaining the object;—and that every affection does not lead to the conduct which might flow from it. Thus a man may feel a desire which, after consideration, he determines not to gratify. Another may experience an affection, and not act upon it;—he may feel benevolence or friendship, and yet act, in the particular case, with cold selfishness;—or he may feel the impulse of anger, and yet conduct himself with forbearance. When, therefore, we go another step backwards in the chain of moral sequences, our attention is directed to certain principles by which

the determination is actually decided,—either according to the desire or affection which is present to the mind, or in opposition to it. This brings us to a subject of the utmost practical importance;—and the principles, which thus decide the determination of the mind, are referable to two heads.

(1.) The determination or decision may arise out of a certain state of arrangement of the moving powers themselves, in consequence of which some one of them has acquired a predominating influence in the moral system. This usually results from habit, or frequent indulgence, as we shall see in a subsequent part of our inquiry. A man, for example, may desire an object, but perceive that the attainment would require a degree of exertion greater than he is disposed to devote to it. This is the preponderating love of ease, a branch of self-love. Another may perceive that the gratification would impair his good name, or the estimation in which he is anxious to stand in the eyes of other men; —this is the predominating love of approbation, or regard to character. In the same manner, a third may feel that it would interfere with his schemes of avarice or ambition,—and so in regard to the other desires. On a similar prin-

ciple, a man may experience a strong impulse of anger, but perceive that there would be danger in gratifying it, or that he would promote his reputation or his interest by not acting upon it;—he may experience a benevolent affection, but feel that the exercise would interfere too much with his personal interest or comfort.

(2.) The determination may arise from a sense of duty, or an impression of moral rectitude, apart from every consideration of a personal nature. This is the *Moral Principle*, or *Conscience*;—in every mind in a state of moral health, it is the supreme and regulating principle, preserving among the moving powers a certain harmony to each other, and to the principles of moral rectitude. It often excites to conduct which requires a sacrifice of self-love, and so prevents this principle from interfering with the sound exercise of the affections. It regulates the desires, and restrains them by the simple rule of purity;—it directs and regulates the affections in the same manner by the high sense of moral responsibility; and it thus maintains order and harmony in the whole moral system.

One of the chief diversities of human character, indeed, arises from the circumstance of one man being habitually influenced by the simple and

straight-forward principle of duty, and another merely by a kind of contest between desires and motives of a very inferior or selfish nature. Thus also we acquire a knowledge of the moral temperament of different men, and learn to adapt our measures accordingly in our transactions with them. In endeavouring, for example, to excite three individuals to some act of usefulness, we come to know, that in one we have only to appeal to his sense of duty; in another to his vanity or love of approbation; while we have no hope of making any impression on the third, unless we can make it appear to bear upon his interest.

V. The principles referred to under the preceding heads are chiefly those which regulate the connexion of man with his fellow-men. But there is another class of emotions, in their nature distinct from these; though, in a practical point of view, they are much connected. These are the emotions which arise out of his relation to the Deity. The regulation of the moral feelings, in reference to this relation, will therefore come to be considered in a department of the inquiry devoted to themselves, and in connexion with the views of the character and attributes of God, which we obtain from the light of reason and conscience.

This analysis of the principles which constitute the moral feelings indicates the farther division of our inquiry in the following manner :—

I. The Desires,—the Affections,—and Self-love.

II. The Will.

III. The Moral Principle, or Conscience.

IV. The moral relation of man towards the Deity.

These constitute what may be called the active principles of man, or those which are calculated to decide his conduct as a moral and responsible being. In connexion with them, there is another class of feelings, which may be called passive or connecting emotions. They exert a considerable influence of a secondary kind; but, in an Essay which is meant to be essentially practical, it perhaps will not be necessary to do more than enumerate them in such a manner as to point out their relation to the active principles.

When an object presents qualities on account of which we wish to obtain it, we feel *desire*. If we have reason to think that it is within our reach, we experience *hope ;* and the effect of this is to encourage us in our exertions. If we arrive at such a conviction as leaves no doubt of the attainment, this is *confidence*, one of the

forms of that state of mind which we call *faith.* If we see no prospect of attaining it, we give way to *despair,*—and this leads us to abandon all exertion for the attainment. When we obtain the object, we experience *pleasure* or *joy;* if we are disappointed, we feel *regret.* If, again, we have the prospect of some evil which threatens us, we experience *fear,* and are thereby excited to exertions for averting it. If we succeed in doing so, we experience *joy;* if not, we feel *sorrow.* If the evil seem unavoidable, we again give way to *despair,* and are thus led to relinquish all attempts to avert it.—Similar emotions attend on the affections. When we experience an affection, we *desire* to be able to act upon it. When we see a prospect of doing so, we *hope;* if there seem to be none, we *despair* of accomplishing our object. When we have acted upon a benevolent affection or according to the dictates of the moral principle, we experience *self-approbation;* when the contrary, we feel *remorse.* When either a desire or an affection has acquired an undue influence, so as to carry us forward in a manner disproportioned to its real and proper tendencies, it becomes a *passion.*

PART I.

OF THE DESIRES, THE AFFECTIONS, AND SELF-LOVE.

SECT. I.

THE DESIRES.

DESIRE is the immediate movement or act of the mind towards an object which presents some quality on account of which we wish to obtain it. The objects of desire, therefore, embrace all those attainments and gratifications, which mankind consider worthy of being sought after. The object pursued, in each particular case, is determined by the views, habits, and moral dispositions of the individual. In this manner, one person may regard an object, as above every other worthy of being sought after, which to another appears insignificant or worthless. The principles which

regulate these diversities, and consequently form one of the great differences in human character, belong to a subsequent part of our inquiry.

In forming a classification of the desires, we must be guided simply by the nature of the various objects which are desired. Those which may be specified as the most prevalent, and the most clearly to be distinguished as separate, may be referred to the following heads.

I. The gratification of the animal propensities, —commonly called the Appetites. These, which we possess in common with the lower animals, are implanted in us for important purposes; but they require to be kept under the most rigid control, both of reason and the moral principle. When they are allowed to break through these restraints, and become leading principles of action, they form a character the lowest in the scale, whether intellectual or moral; and it is impossible to contemplate a more degraded condition of a rational and moral being. The consequences to society are also of the most baneful nature. Without alluding to the glutton or to the drunkard, what accumulated guilt, degradation, and wretchedness follow the course of the libertine,—blasting whatever comes within the

reach of his influence, and extending a demoralising power alike to him who inflicts and to those who suffer the wrong. Thus is constituted a class of evils, of which no human law can take any adequate cognizance, and which therefore raise our views, in a special and peculiar manner, to a supreme Moral Governor.

II. The desire of Wealth, commonly called Avarice;—though avarice is perhaps justly to be regarded as the morbid excess or abuse of the propensity. This is properly to be considered as originating in the desire to possess the means of procuring other gratifications. But, by the influence of habit, the desire is transferred to the thing itself; and it often becomes a kind of mania, in which there is the pure love of gain, without the application of it to any other kind of enjoyment. It is a propensity which may, in a remarkable manner, engross the whole character, acquiring strength by continuance; and it is then generally accompanied by a contracted selfishness, which considers nothing as mean or unworthy that can be made to contribute to the ruling passion. This may be the case even when the propensity is regulated by the rules of justice;—if it break through this restraint, it leads

to fraud, extortion, deceit, and injustice,—and, under another form, to theft or robbery. It is therefore always in danger of being opposed to the exercise of the benevolent affections, leading a man to live for himself, and to study only the means calculated to promote his own interest.

III. The desire of Power, or Ambition. This is the love of ruling,—of giving the law to a circle whether more or less extensive. When it becomes the governing propensity, the strongest principles of human nature give way before it,—even those of personal comfort and safety. This we see in the conqueror, who braves every danger, difficulty, and privation, for the attainment of power; and in the statesman, who sacrifices for it every personal comfort, perhaps health and peace. The principle, however, assumes another form, which, according to its direction, may aim at a higher object. Such is the desire of exercising power over the minds of men; of persuading a multitude, by arguments or eloquence, to deeds of usefulness; of pleading the cause of the oppressed;—a power of influencing the opinions of others, and of guiding them into sound sentiments and virtuous conduct. This is a species of power, the most gratifying by far to

an exalted and virtuous mind, and one calculated to carry benefit to others wherever it is exerted.

IV. The Desire of Superiority, or Emulation. This is allied to the former, except that it does not include any direct wish to rule, but aims simply at the acquirement of superiority. It is a propensity of extensive influence, and not easily confined within the bounds of correct principle. It is apt to lead to undue means for the accomplishment of its object; and every real or imagined failure tends to excite hatred and envy. Hence it requires the most careful regulation, and, when much encouraged in the young, is not free from the danger of generating malignant passions. Its influence and tendency, as in other desires, depend in a great measure on the objects to which it is directed. It may be seen in the man who seeks to excel his associates in the gaiety of his apparel, the splendour of his equipage, or the luxury of his table. It is found in him whose proud distinction is to be the most fearless rider at a steeple-chase or a fox-hunt,—or to perform some other exploit, the only claim of which to admiration consists in its never having been performed before. The same principle, directed to

more worthy objects, may influence him who seeks to be distinguished in some high pursuit, calculated to confer a lasting benefit upon his country or on human kind.

V. The Desire of Society. This has been considered by most writers on the subject as a prominent principle of human nature, showing itself at all periods of life, and in all conditions of civilization. In persons shut up from intercourse with their fellow-men, it has manifested itself in the closest attachment to animals; as if the human mind could not exist without some object on which to exercise the feelings intended to bind man to his fellows. It is found in the union of men in civil society and social intercourse,—in the ties of friendship, and the still closer union of the domestic circle. It is necessary for the exercise of all the affections; and even our weaknesses require the presence of other men. There would be no enjoyment of rank or wealth, if there were none to admire;—and even the misanthrope requires the presence of another to whom his spleen may be uttered. The abuse of this principle leads to the contracted spirit of party.

VI. The Desire of Esteem and Approbation. This is a principle of most extensive influence, and is in many instances the source of worthy and useful displays of human character. Though inferior to the high sense of moral obligation, it may yet be considered a laudable principle,—as when a man seeks the approbation of others by deeds of benevolence, public spirit, or patriotism,—by actions calculated to promote the advantage or the comfort either of communities or individuals. In the healthy exercise of it, a man desires the approbation of the good;—in the distorted use of it, he seeks merely the praise of a party,—perhaps, by deeds of a frivolous or even vicious character, aims at the applause of associates whose praise is worthless. According to the object to which it is directed, therefore, the desire of approbation may be the attribute either of a virtuous or a perverted mind. But it is a principle which, in general, we expect to find operating, in every well regulated mind, under certain restrictions. Thus, a man who is totally regardless of character,—that is, of the opinion of all others respecting his conduct, we commonly consider as a person lost to correct virtuous feeling. On the other hand, however, there may be instances in which it is

the quality of a man of the greatest mind to pursue some course to which, from adequate motives, he has devoted himself, regardless alike of the praise or the disapprobation of other men. The character in which the love of approbation is a ruling principle is therefore modified by the direction of it. To desire the approbation of the virtuous, leads to conduct of a corresponding kind, and to steadiness and consistency in such conduct. To seek the approbation of the vicious, leads, of course, to an opposite character. But there is a third modification, presenting a subject of some interest, in which the prevailing principle of the man is a general love of approbation, without any discrimination of the characters of those whose praise is sought, or of the value of the qualities on account of which he seeks it. This is vanity; and it produces a conduct wavering and inconsistent,—perpetually changing with the circumstances in which the individual is placed. It often leads him to aim at admiration for distinctions of a very trivial character,—or even for qualities which he does not really possess. It thus includes the love of flattery. Pride, on the other hand, as opposed to vanity, seems to consist in a man entertaining a high opinion of himself, while he is indifferent to the opinion

of others;—thus we speak of a man who is too proud to be vain.

Our regard to the opinion of others is the origin of our respect to character in matters which do not come under the higher principle of morals; and is of extensive influence in promoting the harmonies, proprieties, and decencies of society. It is thus the foundation of good breeding, and leads to kindness and accommodation in little matters which do not belong to the class of duties. It is also the source of what we usually call decorum and propriety, which lead a man to conduct himself in a manner becoming his character and circumstances, in regard to things which do not involve any higher principle. For, apart entirely from any consideration either of morality or benevolence, there is a certain line of conduct which is unbecoming in all men; and there is conduct which is unbecoming in some, though it might not in other men,—and in some circumstances, though it might not be so in others. It is unnecessary to add, how much of a man's respectability in life often depends upon finding his way, with proper discrimination, through the relations of society which are referable to this principle; or, by how many actions which are not really wrong, a man may

render himself despised and ridiculous. The love of esteem and approbation is also of extensive influence in the young,—both in the conduct of education and the cultivation of general character; and it is not liable to the objections, formerly referred to, which apply to the principle of Emulation. It leads also to those numerous expedients by which persons of various character seek for themselves notoriety or a name; or desire to leave a reputation behind them, when they are no more. This is the love of posthumous fame, a subject which has afforded an extensive theme both for the philosopher and the humourist.

VII. The Desire of Knowledge, or of Intellectual Acquirement,—including the principle of Curiosity. The tendency of this high principle must depend, as in the former cases, on its regulation, and the objects to which it is directed. These may vary from the idle tattle of the day, to the highest attainments in literature or science. The principle may be applied to pursuits of a frivolous or useless kind, and to such acquirements as lead only to pedantry or sophism;—or it may be directed to a desultory application, which leads to a superficial acquaintance with a variety of sub-

jects, without a correct knowledge of any of them. On the other hand, the pursuit of knowledge may be allowed to interfere with important duties which we owe to others, in the particular situation in which we are placed. A well-regulated judgment conducts the propensity to worthy objects; and directs it in such a manner as to make it most useful to others. With such due regulations, the principle ought to be carefully cultivated in the young. It is closely connected with that activity of mind which seeks for knowledge on every subject that comes within its reach, and which is ever on the watch to make its knowledge more correct and more extensive.

VIII. The desire of Moral Improvement. This leads to the highest state of man; and it bears this peculiar character, that it is adapted to men in every scale of society, and tends to diffuse a beneficial influence around the circle with which the individual is connected. The desire of power may exist in many, but its gratification is limited to a few:—he who fails may become a discontented misanthrope; and he who succeeds may be a scourge to his species. The desire of superiority or of praise may be misdirected in the same manner, leading to insolent triumph on

the one hand, and envy on the other. Even the thirst for knowledge may be abused, and many are placed in circumstances in which it cannot be gratified. But the desire of moral improvement commends itself to every class of society, and its object is attainable by all. In proportion to its intensity and its steadiness, it tends to make the possessor both a happier and a better man, and to render him the instrument of diffusing happiness and usefulness to all who come within the reach of his influence. If he be in a superior station, these results will be felt more extensively; if he be in a humble sphere, they may be more limited; but their nature is the same, and their tendency is equally to elevate the character of man. This mental condition consists, as we shall afterwards have occasion to show more particularly, in a habitual recognition of the supreme authority of conscience over the whole intellectual and moral system, and in a habitual effort to have every desire and every affection regulated by the moral principle and by a sense of the divine will. It leads to a uniformity of character which can never flow from any lower source, and to a conduct distinguished by the anxious discharge of every duty, and the practice of the most active benevolence.

The Emotions which have been now briefly mentioned seem to include the more important of those which are referable to the class of desires. There is, however, another principle which ought to be mentioned as a leading peculiarity of human nature, though it may be somewhat difficult to determine the class to which it belongs. This is the Désire of Action,—the restless activity of mind, which leads it to require some object on which its powers must be exercised, and without which it preys upon itself and becomes miserable. On this principle we are to explain several facts which are of frequent observation. A person accustomed to a life of activity longs for ease and retirement, and, when he has accomplished his purpose, finds himself wretched. The frivolous engagements of the unoccupied are referable to the same principle. They arise, not from any interest which such occupations really possess, but simply from the desire of mental excitement, —the felicity of having something to do. The pleasure of relaxation, indeed, is known to those only who have regular and interesting employment. Continued relaxation soon becomes a weariness; and, on this ground, we may safely assert, that the greatest degree of real enjoyment belongs, not to the luxurious man of wealth, or

the listless votary of fashion, but to the middle classes of society, who, along with the comforts of life, have constant and important occupation.

The mental condition which we call Desire appears to lie in a great measure at the foundation of character ;—and, for a sound moral condition, it is required that the desires be directed to worthy objects; and that the degree or strength of the desire be accommodated to the true and relative value of each of these objects. If the desires are thus directed, worthy conduct will be likely to follow in a steady and uniform manner. If they are allowed to break from these restraints of reason and the moral principle, the man is left at the mercy of unhallowed passion, and is liable to those irregularities which naturally result from such a derangement of the moral feelings. If, indeed, we would see the evils produced by desire, when not thus controlled, we have only to look at the whole history of human kind. What accumulated miseries arise from the want of due regulation of the animal propensities, in the various forms in which it degrades the character of rational and moral beings.—What evils spring from the love of money, and from the desire of power ;—from the contests of rivals, and the tu-

mults of party,—what envy, hatred, malignity and revenge.—What complicated wretchedness follows the train of ambition,—contempt of human suffering, countries depopulated, and fields deluged with blood. Such are the results of desire, when not directed to objects worthy of a moral being, and not kept under the rigid control of conscience, and the immutable laws of moral rectitude. When, in any of these forms, a sensual or selfish propensity is allowed to pass the due boundary, which is fixed for it by reason and the moral principle, the mental harmony is destroyed, and even the judgment itself comes to be impaired and distorted in that highest of all inquiries, the search after moral truth.

The desires, indeed, may exist in an ill-regulated state, while the conduct is yet restrained by various principles; such as submission to human laws, a regard to character, or even a certain feeling of what is morally right, contending with the vitiated principle within. But this cannot be considered as the healthy condition of a moral being. It is only when the desire itself is sound, that we can say the man is in moral health. This, accordingly, is the great principle so often and so strikingly enforced in the sacred writings, "Keep thy heart with all diligence, because out of it are the

issues of life." "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." Thus, there are desires which are folly, and there are desires which are vice, even though they should not be followed by indulgence; and there are desires which tend to purify and elevate the moral nature, though their objects should be beyond the reach of our full attainment in the present state of being. Perfect moral purity is not the lot of man in this transient state, and is not to be attained by his own unaided efforts. But, subservient to it is that warfare within, that earnest and habitual desire after the perfection of a moral being, which is felt to be the great object of life, when this life is viewed in its relation to that which is to come. For this attainment, however, man must feel his total inadequacy,—and the utmost efforts of human reason have failed in unfolding the requisite aid. The conviction is thus forced upon us that a higher influence is necessary, and this influence is fully disclosed by the light of revealed truth. We are there taught to look for a power from on high, capable of effecting what human efforts cannot accomplish,—the purification of the heart.

SECT. II.

THE AFFECTIONS.

As the Desires are calculated to bring some gratification to ourselves, the Affections lead us to our relations to other men, and to a certain line of conduct which arises out of these relations. They are to be viewed as original principles of our nature, planted in us for wise purposes, and the operation of them is to be considered as distinct both from that of the moral principle and of reason,—that is, from any sense of duty or the moral rectitude of the conduct to which they lead, and from any calculation of its propriety and utility. Thus, when the mother devotes her attention by day and night to her infant, if from sickness or helplessness in want of her special care, and perseveres in doing so, with total disregard to her own ease, health, or comfort, she is not influenced either by a sense of duty, or by any feeling of the utility of her conduct: she acts upon an impulse within, which she feels to be a part of her constitution, and which carries her forward in a particular course of anxious and

protracted exertion by the power of itself alone. This distinction appears to be of the utmost practical importance, and we shall have occasion to refer to it more particularly in the sequel.

An Affection, therefore, may be considered as an original feeling or emotion existing in ourselves, which leads us to a particular conduct towards other men, without reference to any principle except the intuitive impulse of the emotion itself. The affections have been divided into the Benevolent and Malevolent; but these titles appear to be incorrect, especially the latter, —as the due exercise of the emotions to which it refers does not properly include what is called malevolence. They only tend to guard us against certain conduct in other men; and, when they are allowed to go beyond this, that is, to actual malevolence or revenge, the application is morbid. It will therefore accord better with the nature of these emotions, to give them the names of Uniting, and Defensive Affections;—the former including justice, benevolence, veracity, friendship, love, gratitude, patriotism, and the domestic affections;—the latter, jealousy, disapprobation, and anger.

I. JUSTICE.

There may be some difference of opinion in regard to the propriety of including justice among the affections; but it seems to be more nearly allied to them than to any of the other classes of moral emotions which have been mentioned, and may, therefore, as a mere matter of arrangement, be conveniently introduced here. Strictly speaking, it might perhaps be considered as a combined operation of an affection and the moral principle; but this is matter of speculation alone. The important consideration relating to it is,—that, in whatever manner it arises, the sense of Justice is a primary and essential part of our moral constitution, conveying the distinct impression of certain conduct which a man owes to his fellow-men, without regard to any considerations of a personal nature, and apart from all positive enactments or laws either divine or human. The requirements of Justice embrace certain points in which every man has an absolute right, and in regard to which it is the absolute duty of every other man not to interfere with him. These rights have usually been divided into three classes;—what I have a right to possess, and what no

man has any right to take from me,—what I have a right to do, and what no man has any title to prevent me from doing,—what I have a right to expect from other men, and what it is their absolute duty to perform. These principles form the basis of what is called Natural Jurisprudence, a code of relative duty deriving its authority from impressions which are found in the moral feelings of all mankind, without regard to the enactments of any particular civil society. In the actual arrangements of civil communities, these great principles of justice are combined with others which are derived merely from utility or expediency, as calculated to promote the peace or the advantage of the community. These may differ in different countries, and they cease to be binding when the enactments on which they rest are abrogated or changed. But no difference of place can alter, and no laws can destroy, the essential requirements of justice.

In these observations, it will be remarked, the word Justice is used as expressing a principle of individual character; and it is in this sense that it is to be properly classed with the affections. The term is employed in another sense, namely, that of distributive and corrective justice, which regulates the claims of individuals in

a community, requires restitution or compensation for any deviation from such claims, or punishes those who have violated them. It is in the former sense that justice is properly to be considered as a branch of the philosophy of the moral feelings; but the same general principles apply to both.

The sense of Justice, therefore, consists in a feeling experienced by every man, of a certain line of conduct which he owes to other men in given circumstances; and this seems to be referable to the following heads,—attending to their interest,—not interfering with their freedom of action,—preserving their reputation,—estimating their character and motives,—judging of their opinions,—consulting their feelings,—and preserving or improving their moral condition. As a guide for his conduct in particular instances, a man has usually a distinct impression of what he thinks due by other men towards himself; justice requires that he rigidly extend to others the same feelings and conduct which, in similar circumstances, he expects from them.

(1.) Justice is due to the persons, property, and interests of others. This constitutes Integrity or Honesty. It, of course, implies abstaining from

every kind of injury, and preserving a conscientious regard to their rights. In this last respect, it allows us to exercise a prudent attention to our own interest, provided the means be fair and honourable, and that we carefully abstain from injuring others by the measures we employ for this purpose. The great rule for our guidance, in all such cases, is found in the immutable principles of moral rectitude; the test of our conduct in regard to individual instances is, that it be such as, were our own interest concerned, we should think fair and honourable in other men.

(2.) Justice requires us not to interfere with the freedom of action of others. This constitutes personal liberty;—but in all civil communities the right is liable to certain restrictions;—as when a man uses his freedom of action to the danger or injury of other men. The principles of justice may also recognise a man's surrendering, to a certain extent, his personal liberty, by mutual and voluntary compact, as in the case of servants, apprentices, soldiers, &c.; but they are opposed to slavery, in which the individual concerned is not a party to the arrangement.

(3.) Justice enjoins a regard to the reputation of others. This consists in avoiding every thing that could be injurious to their good name, either by direct evil speaking, or such insinuations as might give rise to suspicion or prejudice against them. It must extend also to the counteracting of such insinuations when we hear them made by others, especially in circumstances in which the individual injured has no opportunity of defending himself. It includes, farther, that we do not deny to others, even to rivals, any praise or credit which is justly due to them. There is, however, one modification, equally consistent with justice, to which the former of these rules is liable, namely, that, in certain cases, we may be required to make a statement prejudicial to an individual, when duty to a third party or to the public makes it incumbent on us to do so. In such a case, a person guided by the rules of justice will go no farther than is actually required by the circumstances; and will at all times beware of propagating a report injurious to another, though he should know it to be strictly true, unless he is called upon by special duty to communicate it.

(4.) Justice requires us not only to avoid in-

juring an individual in the estimation of other men, but to exercise the same fairness in forming our own opinion of his character, without being misled or biassed by passion or prejudice. This consists in estimating his conduct and motives with calmness and impartiality; in regard to particular instances, making full allowance for the circumstances in which he was placed, and the feelings by which he was, or might be, at the time, naturally influenced. When an action admits of being referred to different motives, justice consists in taking the more favourable view, if we can do so with strict regard to truth, instead of harshly and hastily assigning a motive which is unworthy. Such justice in regard to character and motives we require to exercise with peculiar care, when the conduct referred to has been in any way opposed to our own self-love. In these cases we must be especially on our guard against the influence of the selfish principle, which might lead to partial and distorted views of actions and motives, less favourable to others, and more favourable to ourselves, than justice warrants. When viewed in this manner, we may often perceive, that conduct, which gave rise to emotions of displeasure as injurious to us, was fully warranted by some conduct on our own

part, or was required by some higher duty which the individual owed to another.

(5.) Justice is to be exercised in judging of the opinions and statements of others. This constitutes Candour. It consists in giving a fair and deliberate hearing to their opinions, statements, and arguments, and weighing fairly and honestly their tendency. It is, therefore, opposed to prejudice, blind attachment to preconceived opinions, and that narrow disputatious spirit which delights in captious criticism, and will hear nothing with calmness that is opposed to its own views; which distorts or misrepresents the sentiments of its opponents, ascribing them to unworthy motives, or deducing from them conclusions which they do not warrant. Candour, accordingly, may be considered as a compound of justice and the love of truth. It leads us to give due attention to the opinions and statements of others,—in all cases to be chiefly solicitous to discover truth, and in statements of a mixed character, containing perhaps much error and fallacy, anxiously to discover and separate what is true. It has accordingly been remarked, that a turn for acute disputation, and minute and rigid criticism, is often the characteristic of a contracted and prejudiced

mind; and that the most enlarged understandings are always the most indulgent to the statements of others,—their leading object being to discover truth.

(6.) Justice is due to the feelings of others; and this applies to many circumstances which do not affect either their interest or their reputation. Without injuring them in any of these respects, or in our own good opinion, we may behave to them in such a manner as to wound their feelings. There are minds of an extreme delicacy, which, in this respect, are peculiarly sensitive; —towards such a person of correct feelings strives to conduct himself with suitable tenderness. We may find, however, persons of honest and upright minds, who would shrink from the least approach to real injury, but yet neglect the necessary attention to the feelings; and may even confer a real benefit in such a manner as to wound the individual to whom they intended kindness. The lower degrees of this principle pertain to what is called mere good breeding, which has been defined "benevolence in trifles;" but the higher degrees may restrain from conduct which, without any real injury, inflicts permanent pain. To this head we may perhaps also

refer a due regard to the estimate which we lead a man to form of himself. This is opposed to flattery on the one hand, and on the other to any unnecessary depreciation of his character. Flattery indeed is also to be considered as a violation of veracity.

(7.) While, upon the principles which have been referred to, we abstain from injuring the interests, the reputation, or the feelings of others, there is another class of injuries, of still higher magnitude, which the conscientious mind will avoid with peculiar anxiety, namely, injuries done to the moral principles of other men. These form a class of offences of which no human law takes any adequate cognizance; but we know that they possess a character of the deepest malignity. Deep guilt attaches to the man who, by persuasion or ridicule, has unhinged the moral feelings of another, or has been the means of leading him astray from the paths of virtue. Of equal, or even greater malignity, is the aspect of the writer, whose works have contributed to violate the principles of truth and rectitude, —to pollute the imagination, or corrupt the heart. Inferior offenders are promptly seized by public authority, and suffer the award of public justice;

but the destroyer of the moral being often walks securely through his own scene of moral discipline, as if no power could reach the measure of his guilt but the hand of the Eternal.

To the same head we are to assign the extensive and important influence of example. There are few men who have not in this respect some power, but it belongs more particularly to persons in situations of rank and public eminence. It is matter of deep regret, both to the friend of virtue and the friend of his country, when any of these are found manifesting disregard to sacred things, or giving an air of fashion to what is calculated to corrupt the moral principles of the unthinking classes of society. If they are restrained by no higher motive, the feelings of patriotism, and even of personal safety, ought to produce a solemn caution; and it becomes them seriously to consider, whether they may not thus be sowing among the ignorant multitude the seeds of tumult, revolution, and anarchy.

II. COMPASSION AND BENEVOLENCE.

Great diversity exists in the condition of different individuals in the present state,—some

being in circumstances of ease, wealth, and comfort,—others of pain, deprivation, and sorrow. Such diversities we must consider as an arrangement established by the great disposer of all things, and calculated to promote important purposes in his moral government. Many of these purposes are entirely beyond the reach of our faculties; but, as holding a prominent place among them, we may safely reckon the cultivation of our moral feelings, especially the affections of compassion and benevolence. The due exercise of these is, therefore, calculated to promote a double object, namely, the alleviation of distress in others,—and the cultivation in ourselves of a mental condition peculiarly adapted to a state of moral discipline. By bringing us into contact with individuals in various forms and degrees of suffering, they tend continually to remind us, that the present scene is but the infancy of our existence,—that the beings whom we thus contemplate are the children of the same Almighty Father with ourselves, inheriting the same nature, possessed of the same feelings, and soon to enter upon another state of existence, when all the distinctions which are to be found in this world shall cease for ever. They tend thus to withdraw us from the power of self-love,

and the deluding influence of present things; and habitually to raise our views to that future life, for which the present is intended to prepare us. The due cultivation of the benevolent affections, therefore, is not properly to be considered as a source of moral approbation, but rather as a process of moral culture. They may enable us in some degree to benefit others, but their chief benefit is to ourselves. By neglecting them, we both incur much guilt, and deprive ourselves of an important mean of improvement. The diligent exercise of them, besides being a source of moral advantage, is accompanied with a degree of mental enjoyment which carries with it its own reward. Such appears to be the correct view which we ought to take of the arrangement established by the Creator in this part of our constitution. It is calculated to correct a misconception of an important kind, which considers the exercise of the benevolent affections as possessing a character of merit. To this subject we shall have occasion to refer more particularly in the sequel.

The exercise of the benevolent affections may be briefly treated of, under nearly the same heads as those referred to when considering the principle of Justice;—keeping in mind that they lead

to greater exertion for the benefit of others, and often demand a greater sacrifice of self-love, than is included under the mere requirements of justice. On the other hand, benevolence is not to be exercised at the expense of Justice; as would be the case, if a man were found relieving distress by expedients which involve the necessity of withholding the payment of just debts, or imply the neglect or infringement of some duty which he owes to another.

(1.) Compassion and benevolent exertion are due towards alleviating the distresses of others. This exercise of them, in many instances, calls for a decided sacrifice of personal interest, and, in others, for considerable personal exertion. We feel our way to the proper measure of these sacrifices, by the high principle of moral duty, along with that mental exercise which places us in the situation of others, and, by a kind of reflected self-love, judges of the conduct due by us to them in our respective circumstances.—The details of this subject would lead us into a field too extensive for our present purpose. Pecuniary aid, by those who have the means, is the most easy form in which benevolence can be gratified, and that which often requires the

least, if any, sacrifice of personal comfort or self-love. The same affection may be exercised in a degree much higher in itself, and often much more useful to others, by personal exertion and personal kindness. The former, compared with the means of the individual, may present a mere mockery of mercy; while the latter, even in the lowest walks of life, often exhibit the brightest displays of active usefulness that can adorn the human character. This high and pure benevolence not only is dispensed with willingness, when occasions present themselves; but seeks out opportunities for itself, and feels in want of its natural and healthy exercise, when deprived of an object on which it may be bestowed.

(2.) Benevolence is to be exercised towards the reputation of others. This consists not only in avoiding any injury to their characters, but in exertions to protect them against the injustice of others,—to correct misrepresentations,—to check the course of slander, and to obviate the efforts of those who would poison the confidence of friends, or disturb the harmony of society. To this department, therefore, belongs the high character of the peace-maker, whose delight it is to allay angry feelings even when he is in no degree

personally interested, and to bring together as friends and brethren those who have assumed the attitude of hatred and revenge.

(3.) Benevolence is to be exercised towards the character and conduct of others; especially when these have been in opposition to our personal interest or self-love. This consists in viewing their conduct with indulgence and forbearance, assigning the most favourable motives,—and making every allowance for their feelings, and the circumstances in which they were placed. It leads us also to avoid all suspicions and jealousies which are not clearly justified by fact; and to abstain to the utmost from taking offence,—by putting upon the conduct of others the best construction of which it will possibly admit. It extends still farther to the actual forgiveness of injuries, and the repaying of evil with good,—a conduct represented in the sacred writings as one of the highest attainments the human character can reach, in so far as regards its relation to other men.

(4.) Benevolence is to be exercised towards the feelings of others; and this applies to many

situations in which neither their interest nor their character is concerned. It includes those exercises of the kindly affections which produce so powerful an influence in all the relations of life, but which it is impossible for any description to delineate. It comprehends all our social and civil connexions, but seems peculiarly to belong to our intercourse with inferiors and dependants. Its most anxious exercise may often relate merely to trifles, but it extends to innumerable circumstances in which we may surrender our own feelings to those of others, and our own convenience or gratification to theirs. It implies solicitude to avoid wounding the feelings by pride, selfishness, or fretfulness,—by suspicions, imputations, and jealousies,—or by allowing insignificant things to ruffle the temper, and derange the social comfort. Many, who are not deficient in what we usually call deeds of benevolence, are too apt to forget, that a most important exercise of true benevolence consists in the habitual cultivation of courtesy, gentleness and kindness; and that, on these dispositions, often depends our influence upon the comfort and happiness of others, in a greater degree than on any deeds of actual beneficence.

(5.) Benevolence is to be exercised in regard to the Moral Degradation of others, including their ignorance and vice. This prevents us from deriving satisfaction from moral evil, even though it should contribute to our advantage, as might often happen from the misconduct of rivals or enemies. It implies also that highest species of usefulness which aims at raising the moral condition of man,—by instructing the ignorant, rescuing the unwary, and reclaiming the vicious. This exalted benevolence will therefore also seek to extend the light of divine truth to nations that sit in moral darkness; and looks anxiously for the period when the knowledge of Christianity shall dispel every false faith, and put an end to the horrors of superstition.

III. VERACITY.

In our own mental impressions relating to veracity, we have a striking illustration of the manner in which we rely on this class of moral feelings, as instinctive in the constitution of the mind. On a certain confidence in the veracity of mankind is founded so much of the knowledge on which we constantly depend, that,

without it, the whole system of human things would go into confusion. It relates to all the intelligence which we derive from any other source than our own personal observation:—for example, to all that we receive through the historian, the traveller, the naturalist, or the astronomer. Even in regard to the most common events of a single day, we often proceed on a confidence in the veracity of a great variety of individuals. There is, indeed, a natural tendency to truth in all men, unless when this principle is overcome by some strong selfish purpose to be answered by departing from it:—and there is an equally strong tendency to rely on the veracity of others, until we have learnt certain cautions by our actual experience of mankind. Hence children and inexperienced persons are easily imposed upon by unfounded statements:—and the most practised liar confides in the credulity of those whom he attempts to deceive. When treating of the intellectual powers in another work, I considered the principles which regulate our confidence in human testimony; and it is unnecessary to recur to them in this place. Our present object is briefly to analyze the elements which are essential to veracity, when we view it as a moral emotion, or a branch of individual

character. These appear to be three,—correctness in ascertaining facts,—accuracy in relating them,—and truth of purpose, or fidelity in the fulfilment of promises.

(1.) An important element of veracity is correctness in ascertaining facts. This is essential to the *Love of Truth.* It requires us to exercise the most anxious care respecting every statement which we receive as true; and not to receive it as such, until we are satisfied that the authority on which it is asserted is of a nature on which we can fully rely, and that the statement contains all the facts to which our attention ought to be directed. It consequently guards us against those limited views, by which party spirit or a love of favourite dogmas leads a man to receive the facts which favour a particular opinion, and neglect those which are opposed to it. The sound exercise of judgment, which is connected with this love of truth, differs therefore from the art of ingenious disputation, and is often found directly at variance with it. The same principle is applicable to the truths which are derived as deductions from processes of reasoning. It is thus opposed to all sophistical arguments, and partial or distorted reasonings, by which disputants strive

to establish particular systems, instead of engaging in an honest and simple inquiry after truth. The love of truth, therefore, is of equal importance in the reception of facts, and in the formation of opinions; and it includes also a readiness to relinquish our own opinions, when new facts or arguments are presented to us which are calculated to overturn them.

In the reception of truth, especially on the evidence of testimony, we acquire by experience a degree of caution, arising from having been sometimes deceived. In minds of a certain description, this may be allowed to produce a suspicion with regard to all evidence,—in other words, *Scepticism.* The want of the necessary and proper caution, again, leads to *Credulity.* It is the part of a well regulated mind to avoid both these extremes, by attentively weighing the evidence and the character of the witnesses, and giving to each circumstance its due influence in the conclusion.

(2.) Closely connected with the love of truth in receiving, is the exercise of veracity in the statement of facts, whether derived from our personal observation, or received by testimony from others. It consists not only in the most

scrupulous accuracy of relation, but also in giving it in such a manner as to convey a correct impression to the hearer. It is consequently opposed to all those methods by which either a false statement may be made to assume the appearance of truth, or one essentially true may be so related as to convey a false impression.

Direct fallacy may consist in the alleged facts being absolutely false, or in some of them being so,—in facts being wanting or kept out of view which would give a different import to the whole statement,—or in some of the facts being disguised, distorted, or coloured, so as to alter materially the impression conveyed by them. But, besides such actual fallacy, there are various methods by which a statement literally true may be so related as to convey an erroneous impression. Facts may be connected together in such a manner as to give the appearance of a relation of cause and effect, when they are in truth entirely unconnected;—or an event may be represented as common which has occurred only in one or two instances. The character of an individual may be assumed from a single act, which, if the truth were known, might be seen to be opposed to his real disposition, and accounted for by the circumstances in which he happened at the time to be placed.

Events may be connected together, which were entirely disjoined, and conclusions deduced from this fictitious connexion, which are, of course, unfounded. Several of these sources of fallacy may be illustrated by a ludicrous example. —A traveller from the Continent has represented the venality of the British House of Commons to be such, that, whenever the minister of the crown enters the house, there is a general cry for "places." It may be true that a cry of "places" has gone round the house at certain times, when business was about to commence, or to be resumed after an interval,—meaning, of course, that members were to take their seats. It is very probable, that, on some occasion, this may have occurred at the moment when the minister entered,—so that the statement of the traveller might, in point of fact, be strictly true. The erroneous impression, which he endeavours to convey by it, arises from three sources of fallacy which the anecdote will serve to illustrate, namely,—the false meaning he gives to the word employed,—connecting it with the entrance of the minister as cause and effect,—and representing the connexion as uniform which happened to occur in that particular instance. In the same manner it will appear, that a false impression

may be conveyed respecting the conduct of an individual,—by assigning motives which are entirely imaginary,—by connecting things together which have no relation,—by keeping out of view circumstances which would afford an explanation or palliation of his conduct,—or by attaching to his words a different meaning from that which he intended to convey by them. The common saying, that there are two ways of telling a story, does not therefore refer to what is strictly to be called fabrication or falsehood; but to those distortions or colourings of circumstances, which, however slight in themselves, have the effect of essentially changing the impression of the whole.

To veracity, under this department, we are also to refer the rule—of giving to others an honest and fair impression of our views, motives, and intentions. This is *Sincerity*. It is opposed to hypocrisy, that unworthy display of human character, in which a man disguises his real sentiments, and, on the contrary, professes principles which he neither feels nor values, merely for the purpose of promoting his selfish interests. Such a character exhibits a singular combination of moral delinquencies. It is founded on the lowest selfishness, and includes a departure from ve-

racity and honesty. But besides, it implies a knowledge of virtuous principles and of their proper tendencies, while there is a practical denial of their influence. Sincerity is also opposed to flattery, which tends to give a man a false impression of our opinion, and of our feelings towards him, and likewise leads him to form a false estimate of his own character. It is opposed also to insincerity or double-dealing, by which a man, for certain purposes, professes sentiments towards another which he does not feel, or intentions which he does not entertain.

(3.) The third element of veracity is Truth of Purpose, or fidelity in the fulfilment of promises. This is opposed to actual departure from what was distinctly promised; likewise to all those evasions by which one may convey an impression, or excite the hope, of an intention which he does not mean to fulfil,—or avoid the performance of a real or implied engagement on any other ground than inability to perform it. By this straight-forward integrity of purpose, an individual gives a clear impression of what he honestly intends to perform; and performs it, though circumstances may have occurred to make the fulfilment disagreeable or even injurious to

himself:—"he sweareth to his own hurt," says a sacred writer, "and changeth not."

IV. FRIENDSHIP, LOVE, AND GRATITUDE.

These affections are so nearly allied, that, in this slight analysis, they may be taken together. They consist in a personal and peculiar attachment to an individual, founded either upon some qualities in himself, or some benefits he has conferred on us, or on some one in whom we are interested. The feelings and conduct to which they give rise correspond with those referred to under the preceding affections, with this difference, that, in many instances, they lead to a much greater sacrifice of personal interest and comfort, than usually proceeds either from justice or simple benevolence. The exertions arising out of them are directed, according to the division formerly given,—to promoting the interest or comfort of the object of our regard,—preserving, defending, or advancing his reputation,—treating his feelings with peculiar tenderness,—and his failings with peculiar indulgence,—receiving his opinions with peculiar favour,—and anxiously endeavouring to improve his intellectual and moral condi-

tion. This last consideration is justly reckoned the highest office of friendship :—it is to be regretted that its operation is sometimes impeded by another feeling, which leads us to be blind to the failings and deficiencies of those whom we love.—In exercising simple love and friendship, we rejoice in the advantage and happiness of the object,—though they should be accomplished by others,—but, in exercising gratitude, we are not satisfied unless they be effected in some measure by ourselves.

V. PATRIOTISM.

Patriotism is, perhaps, not properly to be considered as a distinct principle of our nature; but rather as the result of a combination of the other affections. It leads us, by every means in our power, to promote the peace and the prosperity of our country,—and to discourage, to the utmost of our ability, whatever tends to the contrary. Every member of the community has something in his power in this respect. He may set an example, in his own person, of dutiful and loyal respect to the first authority, of strict obedience to the laws and respectful submission to

the institutions of his country. He may oppose the attempts of factious individuals to sow among the ignorant the seeds of discontentment, tumult, or discord. He may oppose and repress attempts to injure the revenue of the state; may aid in the preservation of public tranquillity, and in the execution of public justice. Finally, he may zealously exert himself in increasing the knowledge and improving the moral habits of the people,—two of the most important means by which the conscientious man, in any rank of life, may aid in conferring a high and permanent benefit on his country.

VI. THE DOMESTIC AFFECTIONS.

In this extensive and interesting class are included, conjugal affection,—the parental feelings,—filial reverence,—and the ties of brothers and sisters.—These call forth, in a still higher degree, the feelings and exertions already referred to, and a still greater sacrifice of personal ease, advantage and comfort, in the anxious and diligent discharge of the duties resulting from them. In the conjugal relation, they lead us to the tenderness, the confidence, the mutual forbearance, the

united exertions of those, who have one hope, one interest, and one course of duty. The parental relation implies the highest possible degree of that feeling which studies the advantage of the object of our care,—the promotion of his happiness,—the improvement of his mind,—the culture of his affections—the formation of his habits;—in short, the anxious watching over the development of his character, both as an intellectual and a moral being. The filial relation requires, in an equal degree, respect, affection, submission, and confidence,—a deference to parental opinion and control; and an impression that those parts of parental management, which may often be disagreeable, are guided by a sincere desire to promote the highest interests of the object of this affectionate regard.

Among the feelings of our nature "which have less of earth in them than heaven," are those which bind together the domestic circle in the various sympathies, affections, and duties, which belong to this class of tender relations. It is beautiful also to observe, how these affections arise out of each other, and how the right exercise of them tends to their mutual cultivation.—The father ought to consider the son as, of all earthly concerns, the highest object of his anxious

care;—and should watch over the development of his intellectual character, and the culture of his moral feelings. In the zealous prosecution of this great purpose, he should study to convey a clear impression, that he is influenced purely by a feeling of solemn responsibility, and an anxious desire to promote the highest interests. When parental watchfulness is thus mingled with confidence and kindness, the son will naturally learn to estimate alike the conduct itself, and the principles from which it sprung, and will look to the faithful parent as his safest guide and counsellor, and most valued earthly friend. If we extend the same principles to the relation between the mother and the daughter, they apply with equal, or even greater force. In the arrangements of society, these are thrown more constantly into each other's company; and that watchful superintendence may be still more habitually exercised, which, along with the great concern of cultivating the intellectual and moral being, neglects not those graces and delicacies which belong peculiarly to the female character. It is not by direct instruction alone, that, in such a domestic circle, the highest principles and best feelings of our nature are cultivated in the minds of the young. It is by the actual exhibition of the principles

themselves, and a uniform recognition of their supreme importance;—it is by a parental conduct, steadily manifesting the conviction, that, with every proper attention to the acquirements, accomplishments, and the comforts of life, the chief concern of moral beings relates to the life which is to come. A domestic society, bound together by these principles, can retire, as it were, from the haunts of men, and retreat within a sanctuary where the storms of the world cannot enter.—When thus met together in the interchange of mutual affection and mutual confidence, they present the anticipation of that period, when, after the tumults of life are over, they shall meet again, "no wanderer lost, a family in heaven."

THE DEFENSIVE AFFECTIONS.

The Feelings of jealousy, anger, and resentment, are, not less than the other affections, to be considered as part of our moral constitution; and they are calculated to answer important purposes, provided they are kept under the strict control of reason and the moral principle. Their proper object is primarily a sense of blamable

conduct in others; and they lead us to use proper measures for protecting ourselves against such conduct. While we thus disapprove of the character and conduct of man in certain circumstances, we are led, by our feelings of justice and benevolence, to take part with the injured and oppressed against the oppressors,—or to protect those who are threatened with injuries, by measures for defeating the schemes of their enemies. A still more refined exercise of this class of feelings leads us to seek the reformation of the offender, and to convert him from an enemy into a friend.

Resentment, in cases which concern the public peace, naturally leads to the infliction of punishment; the object of which is to prevent similar conduct in others, not to gratify personal vengeance. Hence it is required to be done in a public manner,—with proper deliberation and coolness,—and with an exact adaptation of the penalty to the offence, and to the object to be attained. The person injured is not likely to do this with the requisite impartiality and candour; for we are apt to feel too deeply injuries offered to ourselves, and not to make the proper allowance for the feelings of others, and the circum-

stances which led to the offence. The higher degrees, indeed, of these tendencies usually go together,—they, who are most susceptible of offences, and most irritable under them, being generally least inclined to make allowances for others. Hence, in all cases, our disapprobation of personal vengeance, or of a man taking the law into his own hands;—and our perfect sympathy with the protectors of the public peace, when they dispassionately investigate a case of injury, and calmly adapt their measures to the real object to be attained by them,—the protection of the public.

The defensive affections are exercised in an unwarranted manner, when they are allowed to be excited by trifling causes; when they are, in degree, disproportioned to the offence, or prolonged in a manner which it did not require; and when they lead, in any measure, to retaliation or revenge. The sound exercise of them, therefore, is opposed to that irascibility which takes fire on trivial occasions, or without due consideration of the intentions of the agent, or the circumstances in which he was placed,—to a disposition to resentment on occasions which do not warrant it,—and, on all occasions, to

harbouring the feeling after the offence and all its consequences have passed over.

Before concluding the subject of the affections, there are three points respecting them which remain to be mentioned as briefly as possible,—the influence of Attention, combined with a certain act of Imagination,—the influence of Habit,—and the estimate of the feeling of Moral Approbation which the exercise of the affections is calculated to produce.

I. In every exercise of the affections, a most important influence is produced by Attention, aided by a certain act of Imagination. This consists in directing the mind intensely and habitually to all the considerations which ought to guide us in the particular relation to which the affection refers. It leads us to place ourselves in the situation of others, and, with a kind of personal, almost selfish interest, to enter into their wants, their anxieties and their feelings; and thus, in their place to judge of the emotions and the conduct which are due from us to them.

Such is the exercise of one who wishes to follow the great rule of doing to others as he would that they should do to him. He is not satisfied with the merely decent discharge of the duties which arise from the affections, but studies intensely the requirements which attach to his particular situation,—searches out the individuals, towards whom they ought to be exercised,—and enters into their condition and their feelings with minute and tender interest. Many who show no want of friendly and benevolent affection, when an individual case is strongly brought before them, are deficient in the kind of exercise which would lead them, in this manner, to find their way to that correct exercise of the affections which really belongs to a scene of moral discipline. Such an exercise is adapted to every situation in life, and tends to guard a man, in his various relations, against the hinderances which indolence, self-love, and pure inattention are apt to bring in the way of his peculiar duties,—and of his discharging them with due regard to the feelings of others.

This mental exercise, of extensive application to the benevolent affections, constitutes what is usually called *Sympathy*. It is composed of an act of Imagination and Self-love, by which we

transfer ourselves, as it were, into the situation of other men, and thereby regulate our conduct towards them. It is however to be kept in mind that the principle of self-love, thus brought into action, is the test, not the rule of our conduct. This is a point on which there has been much vague and useless speculation; and, from not attending to the distinction, some have referred our ideas of benevolence entirely to the principle of selfishness. Such discussions are equally unsound and unprofitable, and are to be placed on a footing with the speculations of the scholastic logic, which we now look back upon merely as matters of historical curiosity. The application of self-love, in the manner which has been referred to, is chiefly useful in enabling us fully to appreciate the facts of the individual case, as we would do if we were personally interested. The rule of our conduct is quite distinct from this, and rests on those fundamental principles of justice and compassion which form a part of our moral constitution. In the practical application of them, they are very much aided by the moral principle or conscience.

The man, who acts habitually under the influence of these rules, learns to question himself rigidly respecting the claims and duties which

result from his moral relations; and the feelings and circumstances of those with whom they bring him into contact. What, (he asks himself,) is the line of action which belongs to me in regard to that individual,—what are his feelings in his present situation; what are the feelings and conduct which he expects from me,—and what are those which I would expect from him were I in his circumstances and he in mine? It is not a due regulation of the affections alone that arises from this wholesome state of mental discipline. It is a moral culture to the mind itself, which may often be fraught with the most important results. For the man who exercises it realizes to himself the feelings of poverty,—the agonies of bereavement,—the impressions of the bed of death;—and thus, without the pain of suffering, he may reap a portion of those important moral benefits which suffering is calculated to yield.

There is another view still to be taken of the advantages derived from that mental discipline which consists in attention to all the relations included under the affections. When habitually exercised, it may often bring before the mind important circumstances in our moral relations, which are apt to make an inadequate impression amid the distractions of present things. When

the parent, for example, looks around the objects of his tender affection, what a new impulse is communicated by the thought that the present life is but the infancy of their being; and that his chief and highest concern is to train them for immortality. A similar impulse must be given to the philanthropist, when he considers that the individuals, who share his benevolent attentions, are, like himself, passing through a scene of discipline, to a higher state of existence, where they will assume a place corresponding to their rank in the scale of moral beings. The refined philanthropy thus arising, while it neglects no proper attention to the distresses of the present life, will seek chiefly to contend with those greater evils which degrade the moral nature, and sever the immortal spirit from its God. He, who judges upon this extended principle, will learn to form a new estimate of the condition of man. Amid the pride of wealth and the splendour of power, he may mourn over a being lost to every feeling of his high destiny; and, by the deathbed of the peasant, amid discomfort and suffering, he may contemplate with interest a purified spirit rising to immortality.

II. Next to the power of attention, we have

to notice the influence produced upon the affections by Habit. This is founded upon a principle of our nature, by which a remarkable relation exists between the affections and the actions which arise out of them. The tendency of all emotions is to become weaker by repetition, or to be less acutely felt the oftener they are experienced. The tendency of actions, again, as I have shewn when treating of the Intellectual Powers, is to become easier by repetition,—so that those which at first require close and continued attention, come to be performed without effort, and almost without consciousness. Now an affection properly consists of an emotion leading to an action; and the natural progress of the mind, in the proper exercise of the affection, is, that the emotion becomes less acutely felt, as the action becomes easier and more familiar.—Thus, a scene of wretchedness, or a tale of sorrow, will produce in the inexperienced an intensity of emotion not felt by him whose life has been devoted to deeds of mercy; and a superficial observer is apt to consider the condition of the latter as one of insensibility, produced by familiarity with scenes of distress. It is, on the contrary, that healthy and natural progress of the mind, in which the emotion is gradually dimin-

ished in force as it is followed by its proper actions,—that is, as the mere intensity of feeling is exchanged for the habit of active benevolence. But that this may take place in the sound and healthy manner, the emotion must be steadily followed by the action which belongs to it. If this be neglected, the harmony of the moral process is destroyed, and, as the emotion becomes weakened, it is succeeded by cold insensibility or barren selfishness.

This is a subject of much importance,—and there are two conclusions which arise out of it respecting the cultivation of the benevolent affections. The one relates to the bad effects of fictitious scenes of sorrow, as represented on the stage, or in works of fancy. The evil arising from these appears to be that which has now been referred to;—the emotion is produced without the corresponding action, and the consequence is likely to be a cold and useless sentimentalism, instead of a sound cultivation of the benevolent affections.—The second is,—that, in cultivating the benevolent affections in the young, we should be careful to observe the process so clearly pointed out by the philosophy of the moral feelings. They should be familiarised with actual scenes of suffering, but this ought to be

accompanied by deeds of minute and active kindness, so as to produce a full and lively impression of the wants and feelings of the sufferer. On this ground, also, I think we should at first even abstain, in a great measure, from giving young persons the cautions they will afterwards find so requisite, respecting the characters of the objects of their benevolence, and the impositions so frequently practised by the poor. Suspicions of this kind might tend to interfere with the important moral process which ought to be our first object, —the necessary cautions will afterwards be learned with little difficulty.

The best mode of contending with the evils of pauperism, on the principles of political economy, is a problem on which I presume not to enter. But, on the principles of moral science, a consideration of the utmost importance should never be forgotten,—the great end to be answered by the varieties of human condition in the cultivation of the benevolent affections. Political science passes its proper boundary when it is permitted in any degree to interfere with this high principle ;—and, on the other hand, it is not to be denied, that this important purpose is in a great measure frustrated by many of those institutions, which cut off the direct intercourse of

the prosperous and the wealthy with those whom providence has committed to them, in this scene of moral discipline, as the objects of their benevolent care.

III. The third point, which remains to be briefly mentioned, is the feeling of moral approbation, or rather the impression of merit, which is frequently attached to to the exercise of the affections. This important subject has been already referred to. When the mother, with total disregard to her health and comfort, devotes herself to watching over her child, she is not influenced by any sense of duty, nor do we attach to her conduct the feeling of moral approbation. She acts simply upon an impulse within, which she perceives to be a part of her constitution, and which carries her forward with unshrinking firmness in a particular course of laborious and anxious service. She may, indeed, be sensible that the violation of these feelings would expose her to the reprobation of her kind; but she does not imagine that the zealous fulfilment of them entitles her to any special praise. The same principle applies to all the affections. They are a part of our moral constitution, intended to bind men together by certain offices of justice, friendship,

and compassion; and have been well named by a distinguished writer, "the voice of God within us." They serve a purpose in our moral economy analogous to that which the appetites answer in our physical system. The appetite of hunger, for example, ensures a regular supply of nourishment, in a manner which could never have been provided for by any process of reasoning; though an exercise of reason is still applicable to preserving over it a certain regulation and control. In the same manner, the various feelings of our moral nature have each a defined purpose to answer, both in respect to our own mental economy and our relations to our fellow-men; and in the due exercise of them they ought to be controlled and regulated by the moral principle. The violation of these feelings, therefore, places man below the level of a moral being; but the performance of them does not entitle him to assume the claim of merit. He is merely bearing his part in a certain arrangement, from which he is himself to derive benefit, as a being holding a place in that system of things which these feelings are intended to keep together in harmony and order. In regard to the great principles of veracity and justice, every one perceives this to be true; but it applies equally to the affections

more strictly benevolent. The man who lives in the habitual exercise of a cold and barren selfishness, which seeks only his own gratification or interest, has indeed, in some sense, his punishment in the contempt and aversion with which he is viewed by his fellow-men.—Much more than this, however, attaches to such a character;—he has violated the principles given him for his guidance in the social order;—he has fallen from his sound condition as a moral being; and incurs actual guilt in the eye of a righteous governor, whose will the order of this lower world is intended to obey. But it by no means follows, that the man who performs in a certain manner the relations of justice, friendship, and compassion, is thereby entitled to claim merit in the view of the Almighty Governor of the universe. He merely acts his part in the present system of moral economy, for which he has been adapted. He is so constituted as to derive satisfaction from the exercise of these affections; and, on the other hand, he receives an appropriate reward in the reciprocal exercise of similar affections by other men, and in the general harmony of society which results from them. An extensive culture of the affections,

therefore, may go on without the recognition of the moral principle, or that state of mind which habitually feels the presence of the Deity, and desires to have the whole character in subjection to his will. We are not entitled to acknowledge the operation of that great principle, unless when the affections are exercised in circumstances which imply a strong and decided sacrifice of self-love to the authority of God. This appears to correspond with the distinction so strikingly stated in the sacred writings—"If ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?"—"I say unto you, love your enemies,—bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you."

On this branch of the subject it is also to be observed, that there is a kind of compensating power among the affections themselves, by which, in the intercourse of men, they act as checks upon each other. Thus resentment acts as a check upon injustice; and the dread of exciting anger in others has probably an influence, in preserving the peace and harmonies of society, which we often ascribe to a higher principle. In regard to the affections more strictly benevolent,

these are also influenced, in a similar manner, by the feeling of disapprobation which attends any remarkable departure from their requirements. When we keep in mind, along with this consideration, the manner in which all men are influenced, in one degree or another, by the love of approbation or regard to character, we perceive in the moral system a beautiful principle of compensation, tending to promote in it a certain degree of harmony. This is remarkably illustrated, for example, in the general feeling of disapprobation which is attached to ingratitude, and to violation of filial affection or parental duty, and even to any marked neglect of the common calls of humanity. On the other hand, we are to keep in mind, that a man is universally considered as in the lowest state of human nature, who, in these respects, has become regardless of character,—that is, of the estimation with which his conduct is viewed by his fellow-men.

In regard to both the affections and the desires, we are farther to remember the deep and extensive influence upon the happiness of the individual himself, which results from a due regulation of these feelings;—the pure mental enjoyment of him whose affections are under sound regula-

tion, and whose desires are habitually directed to those objects which are in the highest degree worthy of being sought after. This mental tranquillity is also represented to us, in a very striking manner, by the influence of those dispositions which we usually refer to the head of Temper. What a constant source of pure enjoyment is a meek and placid spirit, the desires of which are moderate and under due regulation,—which puts upon every thing the best construction it will admit of,—is slow to take offence,—seeks no distinction,—but views itself with humility, and others with candour, benevolence, and indulgence. Such a disposition makes the man happy in himself, and a source of happiness and peace to all around him. On the other hand, what an unceasing source of mental disquiet and turbulence is the opposite disposition,—jealous, envious, and censorious,—ready to take offence at trifles, and often to construe incidental occurrences into intended and premeditated insults,—prone to put unfavourable constructions upon the conduct of others, and thus continually to surround itself with imaginary enemies, and imaginary neglects and injuries. Such a temper is a continual torment to the individual himself, and the cause of disputes,

and jealousies among those with whom he is connected. We cannot fail, also, to perceive that the man of ill-regulated passions injures his own true interest and happiness, as much as he violates his duty to others;—and that his course of life is often productive of degradation, disease, and wretchedness. In all this we see a beautiful example of the wise arrangements of the Creator, who, in the structure of our moral nature, has connected our own peace and happiness with a state of feeling calculated to promote the happiness and peace of all around us. We cannot be at a loss to conclude what a different scene the world would present, if such feelings were universally cultivated; and, on the other hand, we must observe how much of the actual misery that exists in the world arises from derangement of moral feeling, and the various consequences that result from it both to individuals and communities. We find also, by innumerable examples, the remarkable influence produced, by a due cultivation of these feelings, in alleviating, both in ourselves and others, the physical evils which are inseparable from the present state. It is farther to be remarked, as a fact worthy of the deepest attention, that the only distinct information conveyed to us in Scripture respecting the happiness of the

righteous in a future state is,—that it will consist chiefly in a perfect knowledge of the divine character, and a conformity of the soul to the moral perfections of the Deity. "It doth not yet appear," says the sacred writer, "what we shall be; but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is."

In concluding the whole subject of the affections, I have only farther to remark,—that the regulated state of the moral feelings, which has been the subject of the preceding observations, seems to correspond with the quality so emphatically described in the sacred writings under the name of Charity. It is there uniformly represented as the great test of the moral condition; and we find exposed in the most striking manner the worthlessness of all endowments which are not accompanied by this regulation of the whole character. We cannot, therefore, conclude this subject in a more appropriate manner, than by a passage in which, by a few most powerful expressions, a code of ethical science is laid before us with a clearness and a force, which put to nought all human composition: "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels,

and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge ; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing. Charity suffereth long, and is kind ; charity envieth not ; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth ; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Charity never faileth : but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail ; whether there be tongues, they shall cease ; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child : but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see through a glass, darkly ; but then face to face : now I know in part ; but then shall I know

even as also I am known. And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three,—but the greatest of these is charity."

SECT. III.

SELF-LOVE.

There has been some dispute respecting the term Self-love, both as to its general propriety, and as to the mental feelings which ought to be referred to it. There can be no doubt that there is, in our constitution, a principle or propensity which leads us to study our own interest, gratification, and comfort; and that, in many instances, it becomes the ruling principle of the character. It is in this sense that I use the term self-love, without entering into any discussion regarding the strict logical propriety of it. Like the other mental feelings, it is to be considered as part of our moral constitution, and calculated to answer important purposes, provided it be

kept in its proper place, and do not encroach upon the duties and affections which we owe to other men. When thus regulated, it constitutes prudence, or a just regard to our own interest, safety, and happiness; when it becomes morbid in its exercise, it degenerates into selfishness.

A sound and rational self-love ought to lead us to seek our own true happiness, and should prove a check upon those appetites and passions which interfere with this; for many of them, it must be allowed, may be not less adverse to our own real interest and comfort, than they are to our duty to other men. It should lead us, therefore, to avoid every thing, not only that is opposed to our interest, but that is calculated to impair our peace of mind, and that harmony of the moral feelings without which there can be no real happiness. This includes a due regulation of the desires, and a due exercise of the affections, as a moral condition which promotes our own happiness and comfort. Self-love, viewed in this manner, appears to be placed as a regulating principle among the other powers,—much inferior indeed to the great principle of conscience, so far as regards the moral condition of the individual,—but calculated to answer important purposes in promoting the harmonies of

society. The impression, on which its influence rests, appears to be simply the comfort and satisfaction which arise to ourselves from a certain regulation of the desires, and a certain exercise of the affections, and the feelings of an opposite kind which follow a different conduct. These sources of satisfaction are manifold. We may reckon among them the pleasure attached to the exercise of the affections themselves, a feature of our moral constitution of the most interesting kind,—the true mental peace and enjoyment which spring from benevolence, friendship, meekness, forgiveness, and the whole train of the kindly feelings,—the gratitude of those who have experienced the effects of our kindness,—the respect and approbation of those whose esteem we feel to be valuable,—and the return of similar affections and good offices from other men. On the other hand, we have to keep in mind the mental agony and distraction which arise from jealousy, envy, hatred, and resentment,—the sense of shame and disgrace which follow a certain line of conduct,—and the distress which often arises purely from the contempt and disapprobation of our fellow-men. "Disgrace, says Butler, is as much avoided as bodily pain,"—we may safely say that it is much more avoided,

and that it inflicts a suffering of a much more severe and permanent nature. It must likewise accord with the observation of every one, that among the circumstances, which most frequently injure our peace and impair our comfort, are those which ruffle the mind by mortifying our self-love. There is also a feeling of dissatisfaction and self-reproach which follows any neglect of a due exercise of the affections, and which, in a well-regulated mind, disturbs the mental tranquillity fully as much as the disapprobation of other men. It is farther evident, that the man of ungoverned passions, and ill-regulated affections, impairs his own peace and happiness as much as he violates his duties to others,—for his course of life is productive, not only of degradation in the eyes of his fellow-men, but often of mental anguish, misery, disease, and premature death. To run the risk of such consequences, for the gratification of a present appetite or passion, is clearly opposed to the dictates of a sound self-love, as has been distinctly shewn by Bishop Butler; and when, in such a case, self-love prevails over an appetite or passion, we perceive it operating as a regulating principle in the moral system. It does so, indeed, merely by the impression, that a certain regulation of the moral

feelings is conducive to our own true and present happiness; and thus shows a wonderful power of compensation among these feelings, referable entirely to this source. But it is quite distinct from the great principle of conscience, which directs us to a certain line of conduct on the pure and high principle of moral duty, apart from all considerations of a personal nature,—which leads a man to act upon nobler motives than those which result from the most refined self-love, and calls for the mortification of all personal feelings, when these interfere, in the smallest degree, with the requirements of duty. This distinction I conceive to be of the utmost practical importance; as it shews a principle of regulation among the moral feelings themselves, by which a certain exercise of the affections is carried on in a manner, which contributes in a high degree to the harmonies of society, but which does not convey any impression of moral approbation or merit that can be applied to the agent.

Self-love, then, leads us to consult our own feelings, and to seek directly our own interest and happiness. The affections lead us to allow for the feelings, and consider the advantage and comfort of other men; and a certain balance between these principles is essential to the healthy

state of the moral being. It is seldom that the affections are likely to acquire an undue influence, but there is great danger of self-love degenerating into selfishness, which interferes with the duties we owe to others. We have formerly alluded to the means, referable to the due exercise of the affections, and even to a sound and rational self-love, by which this should be in part prevented. When these are not sufficient, the appeal is to conscience; or a distinct reference of individual cases is made to the great principle of moral rectitude. We find, accordingly, this principle called into action, when a man has become sensible of important defects in his moral habits. Thus, we may see a man, who has long given way to a peevish or irascible disposition, that is, to selfish acting upon his own feelings, without due regard to the feelings of others, setting himself to contend with this propensity upon the score of moral duty; while another, of a placid disposition, has no need of bringing the principle into action for such a purpose. In the same manner, a person who has indulged a cold contracted selfishness may, under the influence of the same great principle, perform deeds of benevolence and kindness. Thus we perceive that the moral principle or sense of duty, when

it is made the regulating motive of action, is calculated to control self-love, and preserve the proper harmony between it and the exercise of the affections.

When the principle of self-love becomes deranged in its exercise and objects, it leads to those habits by which a man seeks his own gratification in a way which interferes with his duties to other men. This he may do by an undue pursuit of any of the desires,—whether avarice, ambition, love of eminence, or love of fame;—and the desire of knowledge itself may be so indulged as to assume the same character. Even deeds of benevolence and kindness may be performed on this principle,—as when a man, by such actions, seeks only the applause of the public, or the approbation of certain individuals, from whom, it may be, he expects to derive advantage.—Hence the value we attach, in the exercise of all the affections, to what we call disinterested conduct,—to him who does good by stealth, or who performs acts of exalted justice, generosity, or forbearance, under circumstances which exclude every idea of a selfish motive,—or when self-interest and personal feeling are strongly and obviously opposed to them. Such conduct commands the cordial approbation of all classes of men; and it is striking

to remark how, in the highest conception of such a character that fancy can delineate, we are met by the sublime morality of the sacred writings, impressed upon us by the purest of all motives, the imitation of him who is the giver of all good; —"love your enemies,—bless them that curse you;—do good to them that hate you,—and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you;—that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust."—"If any man will be my disciple," says the same great author of Christianity,—"let him deny himself."

PART II.

OF THE WILL.

WILL or Simple Volition is that state of mind which immediately precedes action ;—We will a certain act ; and the act follows, unless it be prevented either by external restraint, or by physical inability to perform it.

The actions thus produced arise out of the mental emotions formerly treated of,—the desires, and the affections.—We desire an object, or we experience one of the affections :—the next mental act, according to the regular course of a reflecting mind, is proposing to ourselves the question,—shall we gratify the desire,—shall we exercise the affection ? Then follows the process

of considering or deliberating.—We perceive, perhaps, a variety of motives, considerations or inducements,—some of which are in favour of gratifying the desire or exercising the affection, others opposed to it. We therefore proceed to weigh the relative force of these opposing motives, with the view of determining which of them we shall allow to regulate our decision. We, at length, make up our mind on this, and resolve, we shall suppose, to do the act;—this is followed by the mental condition of willing or simple volition.

In the chain of mental operations which, in such a case, intervene between the desire and the volition, a class of agents is brought into view which act upon the mind as moral causes of its volitions;—these are usually called motives—or principles of action. When treating of this subject as a branch of the philosophy of the intellectual powers, I endeavoured to shew the grounds on which we believe, that there are facts, truths, motives, or moral causes, which have a tendency thus to influence the determinations of the mind, with a uniformity similar to that which we observe in the operation of physical causes. For the due operation of moral causes, indeed, certain circumstances are required in the individual on whom they are expected to operate, and,

without these, they may fail in their operation. It is necessary that he should be fully informed in regard to them as truths addressed to his understanding,—that he direct his attention to them with suitable intensity, and exercise his reasoning powers upon their tendencies,—and that he be himself in a certain healthy state of moral feeling. In all our intercourse with mankind, accordingly, we proceed upon an absolute confidence in the uniformity of the operation of these causes, provided we are acquainted with the moral condition of the individual. We can foretell, for example, the respective effects which a tale of distress will have upon a cold-hearted miser, and a man of active benevolence, with the same confidence with which we can predict the different actions of an acid upon an alkali and upon a metal;—and there are individuals in regard to whose integrity and veracity, in any situation in which they can be placed, we have a confidence similar to that with which we rely on the course of nature. In this manner we gradually acquire, by experience, a knowledge of mankind; precisely as, by observation or experiment, we acquire a knowledge of the operation of physical agents. We come to know, for example, that one man is absolutely to be relied on in regard to a particular

line of conduct in given circumstances;—and that another is not to be relied on, if any thing should come in the way, affecting his own pleasure or interest. In endeavouring to excite various individuals to the same conduct in a particular case, we learn, that, in one, we have to appeal only to his sense of duty,—in another, to his love of approbation;—while, on a third, nothing will make any impression except what bears upon his interest or his pleasure. Again, when we find that, in a particular individual, certain motives or truths fail of the effects which we have observed them to produce in others, we endeavour to impress them upon his mind, and to rouse his attention to their bearings and tendencies;—and this we do from the conviction, that these truths have a certain uniform tendency to influence the volitions of a moral being, provided he can be induced seriously to attend to them, and provided he is in that moral condition which is required for their efficiency.

In all such cases, which are familiar to every one, we recognise, therefore, a uniform relation between certain moral causes or motives, and the determinations of the human mind in willing certain acts. It is no objection to this, that men act in very different ways with the same

motives before them;—for this depends upon their own moral condition. When treating of the intellectual powers, I alluded to the metaphysical controversies connected with this subject, and I do not mean to recur to them here. Our present object is entirely of a practical nature,—namely, to investigate the circumstances which are required for the due operation of motives or moral causes, and the manner in which the moral feelings may be so deranged, that these fail of producing their natural or proper effects.

Let us, then, suppose an individual deliberating in regard to the line of conduct he shall pursue in a particular case;—the circumstances or impressions which are calculated to act upon him as moral causes in determining his volition,—that is, in deciding his conduct, are chiefly the following. (1.) Self-love, which prompts him to seek his own ease, interest, or gratification. (2.) Certain affections which lead him to take into view duties which he owes to other men; such as, justice, benevolence, &c. (3.) The impression of moral rectitude or moral responsibility. This is derived from the great principle of conscience, aided by the truths of religious belief. (4.) We ought to add reason or judgment, which

leads him to perceive certain tendencies of actions, apart from their moral aspect. Now, in deciding on his conduct in any particular instance, one man makes every thing bend to his own interest or pleasure,—with little regard to the interests of others;—unless in so far as the absolute requirements of justice are concerned, the infringement of which might expose him to loss of reputation, or even to punishment.—Another surrenders a certain portion of his personal gratification to the advantage or comfort of others, purely as an exercise of feeling from which he experiences satisfaction;—influenced also, probably, in some measure, by a regard to character, or the love of approbation. In such a man, it becomes, in individual instances, a matter of calculation, what degree of the sacrifice of personal ease, interest, or feeling, is to be made to this principle of action. A third contemplates the case purely as one of duty or moral responsibility, and acts upon this principle, though it may involve a degree of personal exertion, or a sacrifice of personal feeling, in itself disagreeable or even injurious to him;—that is, though the strongest personal motives would lead to a different conduct. Let the case, again, refer to one of the desires, bearing no immediate re-

lation to the interests of other men. One man goes directly into the gratification of it, without any consideration. Another, who feels the same desire, considers the influence which the indulgence would be likely to have on his health, interest, or reputation.—This may be considered as simply an exercise of judgment, combined with a certain operation of self-love. A third views the aspect of the deed purely as a question of moral responsibility,—and, if he sees cause, decides against it on this ground alone:—though he should perceive that it might be gratified without any danger to his health, interest, or reputation, or even that it might contribute to his advantage.

We have thus presented to us three characters;—one who acts upon the high and pure ground of moral principle;—one who acts from motives of a more contracted and personal nature, though, in certain instances, his conduct may be the same;—and one who goes straight forward to the gratification of a ruling desire or governing propensity, without attending to motives of either class. The first is a uniform character, on whose conduct we depend in any given circumstances, with a confidence similar to that with which we rely on the operation of phy-

sical agents. For we know the uniform tendencies of the motives or moral causes by which he is habitually influenced, and we know his moral temperament. We have nearly the same kind of knowledge respecting him, which we have of the tendencies of chemical agents towards each other, and which enables us with perfect confidence to foretell their actions. The third has also a uniformity of conduct, though of a very different kind. We know, likewise, his moral condition, and, to predict his conduct, we require only to learn the particular inducements or temptations to which he is exposed in a given instance. The second we cannot rely or calculate upon; for we have not the means of tracing the conflicting views by which he may be influenced in a particular case, or the principle on which he may ultimately decide between them. They involve the strength of the inclination,—and the degree of power exerted over it by the class of personal or selfish motives by which he is influenced.—In regard to various instances of ill-regulated desire, we must add his hope of evading detection, —as on this depends in a great measure, the kind of evils dreaded by him in reference to the indulgence. These taken together imply a com-

plicated process of moral calculation, of which it is impossible for another man to trace the result.

There cannot be an inquiry of more intense interest than to investigate the causes in which originate the differences among these three characters; or, in other words, the principles on which we can explain the fact, that the will of individuals may be influenced so differently with the same motives before them. These appear to be referable to three heads,—Knowledge,—Attention,—and Moral Habits.

I. A primary and essential element, in the due regulation of the will, is a correct knowledge of the truths and motives which tend to influence its determinations. The highest class of these comprehends the truths of religious belief,—a series of moral causes, the tendencies of which are of the most important kind, and calculated to exert a uniform influence upon every man who surrenders himself to their guidance. For this purpose, a correct knowledge of them is required; and to all, who have this knowledge within their reach, the careful acquisition involves a point of the deepest moral responsibility. The sacred writers speak in the strongest terms

of the guilt attached to voluntary ignorance : and this must be obvious to every one who considers the clearness with which the highest truths are disclosed, and the incontrovertible evidence by which they are supported. This applies equally to the principles both of natural and of revealed religion. The important truths of natural religion are partly matters of the most simple induction from the phenomena of nature which are continually before us ; and partly impressed upon our own moral constitution in the clearest and most forcible manner. From the planet revolving in its appointed orbit, to the economy of the insect on which we tread, all nature demonstrates, with a power which we cannot put away from us, the great incomprehensible One, a being of boundless perfections and infinite wisdom. In regard to his moral attributes, also, he has not left himself without a witness; for a sense of these he has impressed upon us in the clearest manner in that wondrous part of our constitution,—the moral principle or conscience. From these two sources may be derived a knowledge of the character of the Deity, and of our relation to him as moral beings ;—and the man is left entirely without excuse who fails to direct to them his most earnest attention, and to make the impressions derived from them the

habitual rule of his volitions, and the guide of his whole character. "He hath the rule of right within," says an eminent writer, "all that is wanting is,—that he honestly attend to it."

Similar observations apply with equal or greater force to the truths of revealed religion. These are supported by a weight of miraculous evidence, and are transmitted to us by a chain of testimony, carrying absolute conviction to the mind of every candid inquirer. They are farther confirmed by a probability, and a force of internal evidence, which fix themselves upon the moral feelings of every sound understanding with a power which is irresistible. The whole is addressed to us as rational beings; it is pressed upon our attention as creatures destined for another state of existence; and the duty is imposed upon every individual seriously to examine and to consider. Every man is in the highest degree responsible for the care with which he has informed himself of these evidences, and for the attention with which he has given to every part of them its due weight in the solemn inquiry. He is farther responsible for the influence of any previously formed prejudice, or any degree of that vitiated state of his moral feelings, which prevents him from approaching the subject with the simplicity of an un-

contaminated mind. From the want of these essential elements of character, it may very often happen, that a man may fancy he has formed his opinions after much examination, while the result of his prejudiced or frivolous inquiry has been only to fix him in delusion and falsehood. Among the singular sophistries, indeed, by which some men shut their minds against inquiries of the highest import, is a kind of impression, not perhaps distinctly avowed in words, but clearly recognised in practice, that these subjects of belief are in a great measure matters of opinion,—instead of being felt to rest upon the basis of immutable and eternal truth. Can any thing be more striking than the manner in which a late distinguished poet expresses himself on the subject of a future life; as if this truth were a mere opinion which could be taken up or laid down at pleasure, to suit the taste of the individual inquirer. "Of the two, I should think the long sleep better than the agonized vigil. But men, miserable as they are, cling so to any thing like life, that they probably would prefer damnation to quiet. Besides, they think themselves so important in the creation, that nothing less can satisfy their pride,—the insects!"* Such is the frivolous sophistry by

* Byron's Letters, Moore's Life, Vol. II. p. 581.

which one, who holds a high rank in the literature of his country, could put away from him the most momentous inquiry that can engage the attention of a rational being.

II. Next to the acquisition of knowledge, and the formation of opinions, calculated to act upon us as moral beings, is the important rule of habitually attending to them, so as to bring their influence to bear upon our volitions. He, who honestly attends to what is passing within, will perceive that this is a voluntary exercise of his thinking and reasoning faculties. When a particular desire is present to his mind, he has the power to act upon the first impulse, or upon a very partial and limited, perhaps a distorted, view of the considerations and motives by which he ought to be influenced;—and he has the power to suspend acting, and direct his attention deliberately and fully to the facts and principles which are calculated to guide his determination. This is the first great step in that remarkable chain of sequences which belong to the regulation of the will. It is what every one is conscious of; and, putting aside all those metaphysical subtleties in which the subject has been involved, this constitutes man a free and responsible agent. In this important pro-

cess, the first mental state is a certain movement of one of the desires or one of the affections ;—to prevent circumlocution, we may use the term Inclination as including both. The second is a reference of the inclination to the moral causes or motives which more peculiarly apply to it,—especially the indications of conscience and the principles of moral rectitude.—If these be found to harmonize with the inclination, volition and action follow, with the full concurrence of every moral feeling. If the inclination be condemned by these, it is, in a well regulated mind, instantly dismissed, and the healthy condition of the moral being is preserved. But this voluntary and most important mental process may be neglected ;—the inclination may be suffered to engross the mind and occupy fully the attention :—the power may not be exercised of directing it to moral causes and motives, and of comparing with them the inclination which is present. The consequence may be, that the man runs heedlessly into volition and action, from which the due exercise of this process of the mind might have preserved him.

But a third condition may take place which presents a subject of the highest interest. The moral causes may be so far attended to, as to prevent the

inclination from being followed by action; while the inclination is still cherished, and the mind is allowed to dwell, with a certain feeling of regret, on the object which it had been obliged to deny itself. Though the actual deed be thus prevented, the harmony of the moral feelings is destroyed;—and that mental condition is lost which is strictly to be called purity of heart. For this consists in the desires and affections, as well as the conduct, being in strict subjection to the indications of conscience and the principles of moral rectitude. The inclination, thus cherished, gradually acquires greater ascendency over the moral feelings;—at each succeeding contest, it more and more occupies the mind; the attention is less and less directed to the moral truths and motives which are opposed to it; the inclination at length acquires the predominance, and is followed by volition. This is what we mean by a man being carried away by passion, in opposition to his moral conviction; for passion consists in a desire or an affection which has been allowed to engross the mind, until it gradually overpowers the moral causes which are calculated to counteract its influence. Now in the whole of this course each single movement of the mind is felt to be entirely voluntary. From that step,

which constitutes the first departure from moral purity, the process consists in a desire being cherished which the moral feelings condemn; while, at each succeeding step, the influence of these feelings is gradually weakened, and finally destroyed.—Such is the economy of the human heart, and such the chain of sequences to be traced in the moral history of every man, who, with a conviction upon his mind of what is right, has followed the downward course which gradually led him astray from virtue. When we trace such a process backwards in a philosophical point of view, the question still recurs,—what was the first step, or that by which the mind was led into the course which thus terminated in favour of vice. In the wonderful chain of sequences which has been established in the mental constitution, it would appear, that a very slight movement only is required for deranging the delicate harmony which ought to exist among the moral feelings;—but this each individual feels to be entirely voluntary. It may consist in a desire being cherished which the moral feelings disapprove;—and, though the effect at first may be small, a morbid influence has arisen, which gains strength by continuance, and at last acquires the power of a moral habit. The more the desire is

cherished, the less is the attention directed to the considerations or moral causes by which it might be counteracted. According to the mental economy, these causes, in this manner, gradually lose their power over the volitions or determinations of the mind; and, at a certain period of this progress, the judgment itself comes to be changed respecting the moral aspect of the deed.

There is still another mental condition to be mentioned in connexion with this subject; in which the harmony of the moral feelings may be destroyed, without the action following. This takes place when the inclination is cherished, as in the former case, in opposition to the indications of conscience; while the action is opposed by some inferior motives,—as a regard to reputation or interest. The deed may thus be prevented, and the interests of society may benefit by the difference; but, so far as regards the individual himself, the disruption of moral harmony is the same; and his moral aspect must be similar in the eye of the Almighty One, who regards not the outward appearance alone, but who looketh into the heart. In this manner it may very often happen, that strong inducements to vice are resisted from motives referring merely to health, or to character. But this is

not to overcome temptation,—it is only to balance one selfish feeling against another.

III. From the state of mind which has now been referred to, there gradually results a *Moral Habit.* This is a mental condition, in which a desire or an affection, repeatedly acted upon, is, after each repetition, acted upon with less and less effort;—and, on the other hand, a truth or moral principle, which has been repeatedly passed over without adequate attention, after every such act makes less and less impression, until at length it ceases to exert any influence over the moral feelings or the conduct. I had occasion to illustrate this remarkable principle in another point of view, when treating of the connexion between the emotions of sympathy and benevolence, and the conduct which naturally arises out of them. This conduct at first may require a certain effort, and is accompanied by a strong feeling of the emotion which leads to it. But, after each repetition, the acts go on with less feeling of the emotion, and less reference to the principle from which they spring; while there is progressively forming the habit of active benevolence. It is precisely the same with habits of vice. At first a deed requires an

effort,—and a powerful contest with moral principles;—and it is speedily followed by that feeling of regret to which superficial observers give the name of repentance. This is the voice of conscience; but its power is more and more diminished after each repetition of the deed;—even the judgment becomes perverted respecting the first great principles of moral rectitude;—and acts, which at first occasioned a violent conflict, are gone into without remorse, or almost without perception of their moral aspect. A man in this situation may still retain the knowledge of truths and principles which at one time exerted an influence over his conduct; but they are now matters of memory alone. Their power as moral causes is gone, and even the judgment is altered respecting their moral relations. He views them now perhaps as the superstitions of the vulgar, or the prejudices of a contracted education; and rejoices, it may be, in his emancipation from their authority. He knows not,—for he has not the moral perception now to know, that he has been pursuing a downward course, and that the issue, on which he congratulates himself, consists in his last degradation as a moral being. Even in this state of moral destitution, indeed, the same warning

principle may still raise its voice,—unheeded but not subdued,—repelled as an enemy, not admitted as a friendly monitor and guide. "I have not the smallest influence over Lord Byron, in this particular," writes one of the chosen friends of that distinguished individual,—"if I had, I certainly should employ it to eradicate from his great mind the delusions of Christianity, which, in spite of his reason, seem perpetually to recur, and to lay in ambush for the hours of sickness and distress." It would be interesting to know what the particular impressions were from which this sympathising friend was anxious to rescue the poet. They were probably the suggestions of a power within, which, in certain seasons of reflection, compelled his attention in spite of his attempts to reason against it,—pleading with authority for a present Deity and a life to come.

The principle of Habit, therefore, holds a most important place in the moral condition of every man; and it applies equally to any species of conduct, or any train of mental operations, which, by frequent repetition, have become so familiar, as not to be accompanied by a recognition of the principles from which they originally sprung. In this manner good habits

are continued without any immediate sense of the right principles by which they were formed; but they arose from a frequent and uniform acting upon these principles, and on this is founded the moral approbation which we attach to habits of this description. In the same manner habits of vice, and habits of inattention to any class of duties, are perpetuated without a sense of the principles and affections which they violate;—but this arose from a frequent violation of these principles, and a frequent repulsion of these affections, until they gradually lost their power over the conduct; and in this consists the guilt of habits. Thus, one person acquires habits of benevolence, veracity, and kindness,—of minute attention to his various duties,—of correct mental discipline,—and active direction of his thoughts to all those objects of attention which ought to engage a well regulated mind:—Another sinks into habits of listless vacuity or frivolity of mind,—of vicious indulgence and contracted selfishness,—of neglect of important duties, disregard to the feelings of others, and total indifference to all those considerations and pursuits which claim the highest regard of every responsible being;—and the striking fact is, that, after a certain period, all this may go on without

a feeling that aught is wrong either in the moral condition, or the state of mental discipline;—such is the power of a moral habit.

The important truth, therefore, is deserving of the deepest and most habitual attention, that character consists, in a great measure, in habits,—and that habits arise out of individual actions and individual operations of the mind. Hence the importance of carefully weighing every action of our lives, and every train of thought that we encourage in our minds;—for we never can determine the effect of a single act, or a single mental process, in giving that influence to the character, or to the moral condition, the result of which shall be decisive and permanent. In the whole history of habits, indeed, we see a wondrous display of that remarkable order of sequences which has been established in our mental constitution, and by which every man becomes, in an important sense, the master of his own moral destiny. For each act of virtue tends to make him more virtuous;—and each act of vice gives new strength to an influence within, which will certainly render him more and more vicious.

These considerations have a practical tendency of the utmost interest. In subduing habits of an

injurious character, the laws of mental sequences, which have now been referred to, must be carefully acted upon. When the judgment, influenced by the indications of conscience, is convinced of the injurious nature of the habit, the attention must be steadily and habitually directed to this impression. There will thus arise desire to be delivered from the habit,—or in other words, to cultivate the course of action that is opposed to it. This desire, being cherished in the mind, is then made to bear upon every individual case in which a propensity is felt towards particular actions, or particular mental processes, referable to the habit. The new inclination is at first acted upon with an effort, but, after every instance of success, less effort is required, until at length the new course of action is confirmed, and overpowers the habit to which it was opposed. But that this result may take place, it is necessary that the mental process be followed in the manner distinctly indicated by the philosophy of the moral feelings;—for, if this is not attended to, the expected effect may not follow, even under circumstances which appear, at first sight, most likely to produce it. On this principle we are to explain the fact, that bad habits may be long suspended by some pow-

erful extrinsic influence, while they are in no degree broken. Thus a person addicted to intemperance will bind himself by an oath to abstain, for a certain time, from intoxicating liquors. In an instance which has been related to me, an individual under this process observed the most rigid sobriety for five years,—but was found in a state of intoxication the very day after the period of abstinence expired. In such a case the habit is suspended by the mere influence of the oath; but the desire continues unsubdued, and resumes all its former power whenever this artificial restraint is withdrawn. The effect is the same as if the man had been in confinement during the period, or had been kept from his favourite indulgence by some other restraint entirely of an external kind;—the gratification was prevented, but his moral nature continued unchanged.

These principles may be confidently stated as facts in the moral constitution of man, challenging the assent of every candid observer of human nature. Several conclusions seem to arise out of them, of the utmost practical importance. We perceive, in the first place, a state which the mind may attain, in which there is such a disruption of its moral harmony, that no power ap-

pears in the mind itself capable of restoring it to a healthy condition. This important fact in the philosophy of human nature has been clearly recognised, from the earliest ages, on the mere principles of human science. It is distinctly stated by Aristotle in his Nicomachean Ethics, where he draws a striking comparison between a man who, being first misled by sophistical reasonings, has gone into a life of voluptuousness under an impression that he was doing no wrong,—and one who has followed the same course in opposition to his own moral convictions. The former he contends might be reclaimed by argument;—but the latter he considers as incurable. In such a state of mind, therefore, it follows, by an induction which cannot be controverted, either that the evil is irremediable and hopeless, or that we must look for a power from without the mind which may afford an adequate remedy. We are thus led to perceive the adaptation and the probability of the provisions of Christianity, where an influence is indeed disclosed to us, capable of restoring the harmony which has been lost, and raising man anew to his place as a moral being. We cannot hesitate to believe that the Power, who framed the wondrous fabric, may thus hold intercourse with it, and redeem it from disorder

and ruin. On the contrary, it accords with the highest conceptions we can form of the benevolence of the Deity, that he should thus look upon his creatures in their hour of need; and the system disclosing such communication appears, upon every principle of sound philosophy, to be one of harmony, consistency, and truth. The subject, therefore, leads our attention to that inward change, so often the scoff of the profane, but to which so prominent a place is assigned in the sacred writings, in which a man is said to be created anew by a power from heaven, and elevated in his whole views and feelings as a moral being. Sound philosophy teaches us, that there is a state in which nothing less than such a complete transformation can restore the man to a healthy moral condition,—and that, for producing it, nothing will avail but an influence from without the mind,—a might and a power from the same Almighty One who originally framed it. Philosophy teaches in the clearest manner, that a portion of mankind require such a transformation;—Christianity informs us that it is required by all. When the inductions of science and the dictates of revelation harmonize to this extent, who shall dare to assert that the latter are not truth? Who, that places himself in the presence

of a being of infinite purity, will say,—he requires not such a change; or that, for the production of it, he needs no agency, beyond the resources of his own mind. If none be found who is entitled to believe he forms the exception, we are forced into the acknowledgment of the truth so powerfully impressed upon us in the sacred writings, that, in the eye of the Almighty One, no man in himself is righteous;—and that his own power avails not for restoring him to a state of moral purity.

From the whole of this inquiry, we see the deep influence of habits; and the fearful power which they may acquire over the whole moral system;—considerations of the highest practical interest to those who would prevent the formation of habits of an injurious nature, or who, feeling their influence, strive to be delivered from them. There is indeed a point in this downward course, where the habit has acquired undisputed power, and the whole moral feelings yield to it unresisting submission. Peace may then be within, but that peace is the stillness of death; and, unless a voice from heaven shall wake the dead, the moral being is lost. But, in the progress towards this fearful issue, there may be a tumult,

and a contest, and a strife, and the voice of conscience may still command a certain attention to its warnings. While there are these indications of life, there is yet hope of the man; but, on each moment is now suspended his moral existence. Let him retire from the influence of external things;—and listen to that voice within, which, though often unheeded, still pleads for God. Let him call to aid those high truths which relate to the presence and inspection of this being of infinite purity, and the solemnities of a life which is to come. Above all, let him look up in humble supplication to that pure and holy One, who is the witness of this warfare,—who will regard it with compassion, and impart his powerful aid. But let him not presumptuously rely on this aid, as if the victory were already secured. The contest is but begun;—and there must be a continued effort, and an unceasing watchfulness,—a habitual direction of the attention to those truths which, as moral causes, are calculated to act upon the mind,—and a constant reliance upon the power from on high which is felt to be real and indispensable. With all this provision, his progress may be slow; for the opposing principle, and the influence of established moral habits, may be felt contending for their

former dominion: but, by each advantage that is achieved over them, their power will be broken and finally destroyed. Now in all this contest towards the purity of the moral being, each step is no less a process of the mind itself than the downward course by which it was preceded. It consists in a surrender of the will to the suggestions of conscience, and a habitual direction of the attention to those truths which are calculated to act upon the moral volitions. In this course, the man feels that he is authorized to look for a might and an influence not his own. This is no imaginary or mysterious impression, which one may fancy that he feels, and then pass on contented with the vision;—but a power which acts through the healthy operations of his own mind;—it is in his own earnest exertions, as a rational being, to regulate these operations, that he is warranted to expect its communication; —and it is in feeling these assuming the characters of moral health, that he has the proof of its actual presence.

And where is the improbability that the pure and holy One, who framed the wondrous moral being, may thus hold intercourse with it, and impart an influence in its hour of deepest need. According to the utmost of our conceptions, it is

the highest of his works,—for he has endowed it with powers of rising to the contemplation of himself, and with the capacity of aspiring to the imitation of his own moral perfections. We cannot, for a moment, doubt, that his eye must reach its inmost movements, and that all its emotions, and desires, and volitions are exposed to his view. We must believe that he looks with displeasure when he perceives them wandering from himself;—and contemplates with approbation the contest, when the spirit strives to throw off its moral bondage, and to fight its way upwards to a conformity to his will. Upon every principle of sound philosophy, all this must be open to his inspection; and we can perceive nothing opposed to the soundest inductions of reason in the belief, that he should impart an influence to the feeble being in this high design, and conduct him to its accomplishment. In all this, in fact, there is so little improbability, that we find it impossible to suppose it could be otherwise.—We find it impossible to believe, that such a mental process could go on without the knowledge of him whose presence is in every place,—or that, looking upon it, he should want either the power or the willingness to impart his effectual aid.

But, independently of our conviction of an actual communication from the Deity, there is a power in the mind itself, which is calculated to draw down upon it an influence of the most efficient kind. This is produced by the mental process which we call Faith; and it may be illustrated by an impression which many must have experienced. Let us suppose that we have a friend of exalted intelligence and virtue, who has often exercised over us a commanding influence, —restraining us from pursuits to which we felt an inclination,—exciting us to virtuous conduct, —and elevating, by his intercourse with us, our impressions of a character on which we wished to form our own. Let us suppose that we are removed to a distance from this friend, and that circumstances of difficulty or danger occur, in which we feel the want of a guide and counsellor. In the reflections which the situation naturally gives rise to, the image of our friend is brought before us; an influence is conveyed analogous to that which was often produced by his presence and his counsel;—and we feel as if he were actually present, to render his advice and watch our conduct. How much would this impression be increased, could we farther entertain the thought, that this absent friend was able, in

some way, to communicate with us, so far as to be aware of our present circumstances, and to perceive our efforts to recall the influence of his character upon our own.—Such is the intercourse of the soul with God.—Every movement of the mind is known to him; his eye is present with it, when, in any situation of duty, distress, or mental discipline, the man, under this exercise of faith, realizes the presence and character of the Deity, and solemnly inquires how, in the particular instance, his moral feelings and his conduct will appear in the eye of him who seeth in secret. This is no vision of the imagination, but a fact supported by every principle of sound reason,—an influence which a man brings down upon himself, when, by an effort of his own mind, he thus places himself in the immediate presence of the Almighty. The man who does so in every decision of life is he who lives by faith;—and, whether we regard the inductions of reason, or the dictates of sacred truth, such a man is taught to expect an influence greater and more effectual still. This is a power immediately from God, which shall be to him direction in every doubt, —light in every darkness,—strength in his utmost weakness,—and comfort in all distress;—a power which shall bear upon all the principles of

his moral nature, when he carries on the mighty conflict of bringing every desire and every volition under a conformity to the divine will. We again hazard with confidence the assertion, that in all this there is no improbability ;—but that, on the contrary, the improbability is entirely on the other side,—in supposing that any such mental process could take place without the knowledge and the interposition of that incomprehensible One, whose eye is upon all his works.

PART III.

OF THE MORAL PRINCIPLE, OR CONSCIENCE.

THERE has been much dispute respecting the nature and even the existence of the moral principle, as a distinct element of our mental constitution; but this controversy has now probably passed away, along with other speculations of a metaphysical nature, in regard to which a kind of evidence was sought of which the subjects are not susceptible. Without arguing respecting the propriety of speaking of a separate power or principle, we simply contend for the fact, that there is a mental exercise by which we feel certain actions to be right and certain others wrong. It is an element or a movement of our moral

nature which admits of no analysis, and no explanation, and is referable to no other principle than a simple recognition of the fact, which forces itself upon the conviction of every man who looks into the processes of his own mind. Of the existence and the nature of this most important principle, therefore, the evidence is entirely within. We appeal to the consciousness of every man, that he perceives a power which, in particular cases, warns him of the conduct which he ought to pursue, and administers a solemn admonition when he has departed from it. For while his judgment conveys to him a certain impression, both of the qualities and the tendencies of actions, he has, besides this, a feeling by which he views the actions with approbation or disapprobation, in referenee purely to their moral aspect, and without any regard to their consequences. When we refer to the sacred writings, we find the principle of conscience represented as a power of such importance,—that, without any acquired knowledge, or any actual precepts, it is sufficient to establish, in every man, such an impression of his duty as leaves him without excuse in the neglect of it. "For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto them-

selves: Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another." We even find a power assigned to the decisions of conscience, differing in extent only, but not in kind, from the judgment of the Almighty;—"If our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things."

The province of conscience then appears to be, to convey to man a certain conviction of what is morally right and wrong, in regard to conduct in individual cases,—and the general exercise of the desires or affections. This it does independently of any acquired knowledge, and without reference to any other standard of duty. It does so, by a rule of right which it carries within itself,—and by applying this to the primary moral feelings, that is, the desires and affections, so as to preserve among them a just and healthy balance towards each other. It seems therefore to hold a place among the moral powers, analogous to that which reason holds among the intellectual;—and, when we view it in this relation, there appears a beautiful harmony pervading the whole economy of the mind.

By his intellectual operations, man acquires

the knowledge of a certain series of facts;—he remembers them,—he separates and classifies them,—and forms them into new combinations. But with the most active exercise of all these operations, his mind might present an accumula-tion of facts, without order, harmony, or utility; —without any principle of combination,—or com-bined only in those fantastic and extravagant forms which appear in the conceptions of the ma-niac. It is reason that reduces the whole into order and harmony,—by comparing, distinguish-ing, and tracing their true analogies and relations, —and then by deducing truths as conclusions from the whole. It is in this manner particu-larly, that man acquires a knowledge of the uni-form actions of bodies on each other,—and, con-fiding in the uniformity of these actions, learns to direct his means to the ends which he has in view. He knows also his own relations to other sentient beings,—and adapts his conduct to them, according to the circumstances in which he is placed,—the persons with whom he is connect-ed,—and the objects which he wishes to accom-plish. He learns to accommodate his measures to new circumstances as they arise,—and thus is guided and directed through his physical relations. When reason is suspended, all this harmony is

destroyed. The visions of the mind are acted upon as facts; things are combined into fantastic forms, entirely apart from their true relations;—conduct is widely at variance with what circumstances require;—ends are attempted by means which have no relation to them;—and the ends themselves are equally at variance with those which are suitable to the circumstances of the individual. Such is the maniac, whom accordingly we shut up, to prevent him from being dangerous to the public;—for he has been known to mistake so remarkably the relations of things, and the conduct adapted to his circumstances, as to murder his most valuable friend, or his own helpless infant.

In all this process there is a striking analogy to certain conditions of the moral feelings, and to the control which is exercised over them by the principle of conscience. By self-love, a man is led to seek his own gratification or advantage; —and the desires direct him to certain objects by which these propensities may be gratified. But the affections carry forth his views to other men with whom he is connected by various relations, and to the offices of justice, veracity, and benevolence, which arise out of them. Conscience is the regulating power, which, acting upon the de-

sires and affections, as reason does upon a series of facts, preserves among them harmony and order. It does so by repressing the propensity of selfishness, and reminding the man of the true relation between regard to his own interest and the duties he owes to other men. It regulates his desires and pursuits, by carrying his views beyond present feelings and present gratifications, to future times and future consequences,—and by raising his attention to his relation to the great moral governor of the universe. He thus learns to adapt his conduct and pursuits, not to present and transient feelings, but to an extended view of his great and true interests as a moral being. Such is conscience,—still, like reason, pointing out the moral ends a man ought to pursue,—and guiding him in the means by which he ought to pursue them;—and the man does not act in conformity with the constitution of his nature, who does not yield to conscience the supremacy and direction over all his other feelings and principles of action. But the analogy does not stop here;—for we can also trace a condition in which this controlling influence of conscience is suspended or lost. I formerly endeavoured to trace the manner in which this derangement arises, and have now only to allude

to its influence on the harmony of the moral feelings. Self-love degenerates into low selfish gratification: the desires are indulged without any other restraint than that which arises from a mere selfish principle,—as a regard to health, perhaps in some degree to reputation: the affections are exercised only in so far as similar principles impose a certain degree of attention to them: present and momentary impulses are acted upon, without any regard to future results: conduct is adapted to present gratification, without the perception either of its moral aspect, or its consequences to the man himself as a responsible being; and without regard to the means by which these feelings are gratified. In all this violation of moral harmony, there is no derangement of the ordinary exercise of judgment. In the most remarkable example that can be furnished by the history of human depravity, the man may be as acute as ever in the details of business or the pursuits of science. There is no diminution of his sound estimate of physical relations,—for this is the province of reason. But there is a total derangement of his sense and approbation of moral relations,—for this is conscience. Such a condition of mind, then, appears to be, in reference to the moral feelings, what insanity is in regard to

the intellectual. The intellectual maniac fancies himself a king, surrounded by every form of earthly splendour,—and this hallucination is not corrected even by the sight of his bed of straw and all the horrors of his cell. The moral maniac pursues his way, and thinks himself a wise and a happy man;—but feels not that he is treading a downward course, and is lost as a moral being.

In the preceding observations respecting the moral principle or conscience, I have alluded chiefly to its influence in preserving a certain harmony among the other feelings,—in regulating the desires by the indications of moral purity, —and preventing self-love from interfering with the duties and affections which we owe to other men. But there is another and a most important purpose which is answered by this faculty, and that is to make us acquainted with the moral attributes of the Deity. In strict philosophical language we ought perhaps to say, that this high purpose is accomplished by a combined operation of conscience and reason;—but, however this may be, the process appears clear and intelligible in its nature, and fully adapted to the end now assigned to it. From a simple exercise of

mind, directed to the great phenomena of nature, we acquire the knowledge of a First Cause,—a being of infinite power and infinite wisdom; and this conclusion is impressed upon us in a peculiar manner, when, from our own bodily and mental endowments, we infer the attributes of him who framed us:—"he that planted the ear," says a sacred writer, "shall he not hear;—he that formed the eye, shall he not see;—he that teacheth man knowledge, shall not he know?" When we trace backwards a series of finite yet intelligent beings, we must arrive at one of two conclusions:—We must either trace the series through an infinite and eternal succession of finite beings, each the cause of the one which succeeded it;—or we must refer the commencement of the series to one great intelligent being, himself uncaused, infinite, and eternal. To trace the series to one being, finite, yet uncaused, is totally inadmissible; and not less so is the conception of finite beings in an infinite and eternal series. The belief of one infinite being, self-existent and eternal, is, therefore, the only conclusion at which we can arrive, as presenting any characters of credibility or truth. The superintending care, the goodness, and benevolence of the Deity, we learn, with a feeling of equal cer-

tainty, from the ample provision he has made for supplying the wants and ministering to the comfort of all the creatures whom he has made. This part of the argument, also, is in the clearest manner insisted upon in the sacred writings; when the apostle Paul, in calling upon the people of Lystra to worship the true God, who made heaven and earth, adds, as a source of knowledge from which they ought to learn his character;—"he left not himself without a witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness."

A being, thus endowed with infinite power, wisdom and goodness, we cannot conceive to exist without moral feelings; and, by a process equally obvious, we arrive at a distinct knowledge of these, when, from the moral perceptions of our own minds, we infer the moral attributes of him who thus formed us. We have certain impressions of justice, veracity, compassion, and moral purity, in regard to our own conduct,—we have a distinct approbation of these qualities in others,—and we attach a feeling of disapprobation to the infringement of them. By a simple step of reasoning, which conveys an impression of absolute conviction, we conclude, that

he who formed us with these feelings, possesses, in his own character, corresponding moral attributes, which, though they resemble in kind, must infinitely exceed in degree, those qualities in the wisest and the best of men. In our actual observation of mankind, we perceive these attributes impaired in their exercise by human weakness, distorted by human passion,—and impeded in their operation by personal wants, personal feelings, and selfish interests. But, apart from such deteriorating causes, we have a certain abstract idea of the full and perfect exercise of those qualities; and it is in this pure and perfect form, that we ascribe them to the Almighty. In him, they can be impeded by no weakness,—distorted by no passion, and impaired in their operation by no personal interest. We therefore conclude him to be perfect in the exercise of all these moral attributes, and to take the most rigid estimate of any infringement of them by man:—this is what we call the holiness of God. Even the man, who has himself departed from moral rectitude, still feels a power within, which points with irresistible force to what is purity, and fixes upon him a conviction that God is pure.

When we view such a being apart from any inferior creature, all seems harmony and consis-

tency;—we have only to contemplate him as high and holy, and enjoying perfect happiness in his own spotless attributes. But, when we view him in relation to man in a state of moral discipline, and, in that state, tainted deeply with moral evil, a difficulty arises of an appalling magnitude. There is ample scope now, we perceive, for the exercise of his holiness, veracity, and justice; and he appears in sublime and terrible majesty in his exalted character as a moral governor. But, amid such a display, there is an obvious interruption to the exercise of compassion, —especially in that essential department of it,— mercy or forgiveness. This attribute may be exercised without restraint by an individual, where his own interests alone are concerned; because in him it involves only a sacrifice of self-love. But, forgiveness in a moral governor either implies an actual change of purpose, or supposes his decision to have been made without sufficient knowledge of, or due attention to, all the facts by which he ought to have been influenced; —it denotes either undue rigour in the law, or ignorance or inattention in him who administers it; and it may very often interfere with the essential requisites of justice. But, in a moral governor of infinite perfection, there can be nei-

ther ignorance of facts nor change of purpose;—the requirements of his justice must stand unshaken;—and his law, written on the hearts of all his rational creatures, must be upheld, in the face of the universe, as holy, and just, and good. Is, then, the exercise of mercy to be excluded from our conception of the divine character,—and is there no forgiveness with God? The soundest inductions of philosophy, applied to the actual state of man, bring us to this momentous question; but the highest efforts of human science fail to answer it. It is in this our utmost need, that we are met by the dictates of revelation, and are called to humble the pride of our reason before that display of the harmony and integrity of the divine character. We there learn the truths, far beyond the utmost inductions of human science, and the utmost conceptions of human thought,—that an atonement is made, a sacrifice offered;—and that the exercise of forgiveness is consistent with the perfections of the Deity. Thus, by a process of the mind itself, which seems to present every element of fair and logical reasoning, we arrive at a full conviction of the necessity, and the moral probability, of that truth which forms the great peculiarity of the Christian revelation. More than any other, in

the whole circle of religious belief, it rises above the inductions of science, while reason, in its soundest conclusions, recognises its probability, and receives its truth; and it stands forth alone, simply proposed to our belief, and offered to our acceptance, on that high but peculiar evidence by which is supported the testimony of God.

The truth of these considerations is impressed upon us in the strongest manner, when we turn our attention to the actual moral condition of mankind. When we contemplate man, as he is displayed to us by the soundest inductions of philosophy,—his capacity for distinguishing truth from falsehood, and evil from good; the feelings and affections which bind him to his fellow-men, and the powers which enable him to rise to intercourse with God:—when we consider the power, which sits among his other principles and feelings, as a faithful monitor and guide, carrying in itself a rule of rectitude without any other knowledge, and a right to govern without reference to any other authority;—we behold a fabric complete and harmonious in all its parts, and eminently worthy of its Almighty Maker;—we behold an ample provision for peace, and order, and harmony, in the whole moral world. But, when we compare with these

inductions the actual state of man, as displayed to us in the page of history, and in our own daily observation, the conviction is forced upon us, that some mighty change has taken place in this beauteous system, some marvellous disruption of its moral harmony. The manner in which this condition arose,—or the origin of moral evil under the government of God, is a question entirely beyond the reach of the human faculties.—It is one of those, however, on which it is simply our duty to keep in mind, that our business is, not with the explanation, but with the facts;—for, even by the conclusions of philosophy, we are compelled to believe, that man has fallen from his high estate,—and that a pestilence has gone abroad over the face of the moral creation.

In arriving at this conclusion, it is not with the inductions of moral science alone, that we compare or contrast the actual state of man. For one bright example has appeared in our world, in whom was exhibited human nature in its highest state of order and harmony. In regard to the mighty purposes which He came to accomplish, indeed, philosophy fails us, and we are called to submit the inductions of our reason to the testimony of God. But, when we con-

template his whole character purely as a matter of historical truth,—the conviction is forced upon us, that this was the highest state of man;—and the inductions of true science harmonize with the impression of the Roman centurion, when, on witnessing the conclusion of the earthly sufferings of the Messiah, he exclaimed—"truly this was the Son of God."

When we endeavour to trace the manner in which mankind have departed so widely from this high pattern, we arrive at moral phenomena of which we can offer no explanation. But an inquiry of much greater importance is to mark the process by which, in individual instances, conscience ceases to be the regulating principle of the character; and this is a simple and legitimate object of philosophical observation. There cannot, indeed, be an inquiry of more intense and solemn interest, than to trace the chain of sequences which has been established in the mind of man as a moral being. We can view it only as a matter of fact, without being able to refer it to any other principle than the will of Him who framed us;—but the facts which are before us claim the serious attention of every man who would cultivate that most important of all pur-

suits,—the knowledge of his own moral condition. The fact to which I chiefly allude is a certain relation, formerly referred to, between the truths which are calculated to act upon us as moral causes, and the mental emotions which ought to result from them;—and between these emotions and a certain conduct which they tend to produce. If the due harmony between these be carefully cultivated, the result is a sound moral condition; but, by every instance in which this harmony is violated, a morbid influence has been introduced, which gains strength in each succeeding volition, and carries disorder through the moral economy. We have formerly illustrated this important moral process, by the relation between the emotion of compassion, and the conduct which ought to arise from it. If this tendency of the emotion be diligently cultivated, the result is the habit of active benevolence;—but, if the emotion be violated, its influence is progressively diminished, and a character is produced of cold and barren selfishness.

A similar chain of sequences is to be observed respecting the operation of those great truths, which, under the regulating power of conscience, are calculated to act as moral causes in our mental economy;—we may take for example, the

truths relating to the character and perfections of the Deity, and the influence which these ought to produce upon every rational being. We have seen the knowledge which we derive from the light of nature respecting the attributes of God, when, from his works around us, we discover him as a being of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness; and when, from the moral impressions of our own minds, we infer his perfections as a moral Governor of infinite holiness, justice, and truth. By a proper direction of the mind to the truths which are thus conveyed to us respecting the Deity, there would naturally arise a corresponding chain of emotions of which he is the object. These are a sense of veneration towards him, as infinitely great, wise, and powerful,—of love and thankfulness, as infinitely good,—and of habitual regard to his authority and will, as a moral governor of purity and justice, and as requiring a corresponding character in all his creatures. A close and constant relation ought to be preserved between these truths and these emotions, and on this depends the moral harmony of the mind. The preservation of this harmony, again, is intimately connected with a mental process which every man feels to be voluntary,—or in his power to perform, if he wills. It consists

in a careful direction of the mind to such truths, so as to enable them to act as moral causes in the mental economy:—by the established order of moral sequences, the emotions naturally follow:—these are then to be cherished with satisfaction and reverence; and a corresponding influence upon the character and conduct is the farther consequence. But the first step in this important process may be neglected;—the mind may not be directed with due care to the truths which thus claim its highest regard,—and the natural result is a corresponding deficiency in the emotions and conduct which ought to flow from them. This will be the case in a still higher degree, if there has been formed any actual derangement of the moral condition,—if deeds have been committed, or even desires cherished, by which the indications of conscience have been violated. The moral harmony of the mind is then lost, and, however slight may be the first impression, a morbid influence has begun to operate in the mental economy, which tends gradually to gain strength, until it becomes a ruling principle in the whole character. The truths connected with the divine perfections are now neither invited nor cherished, but are felt to be intruders which disturb the mental tranquillity. The attention ceases to be

directed to them, and the corresponding emotions vanish from the mind. Such appears to be the moral history of those, who, in the striking language of the sacred writings, "do not like to retain God in their knowledge."

When the moral harmony of the mind has been impaired to this extent, another mental condition arises, according to the wondrous system of moral sequences. This consists in a distortion of the understanding itself, regarding the first great principles of moral truth. For, a fearless contemplation of the truth, respecting the divine perfections, having become inconsistent with the moral condition of the mind, there next arises a desire to discover a view of them more in accordance with its own feelings. This is followed, in due course, by a corresponding train of its own speculations; and these, by a mind so prepared, are received as truth. The inventions of the mind itself thus become the regulating principles of its emotions, and this mental process, advancing from step to step, terminates in moral degradation and anarchy.

Nothing can be more striking than the manner in which these great principles of ethical science are laid down in the sacred writings;—"the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the

things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse: Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools; and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things."—"And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient." The various steps, in this course of moral degradation, are here represented as a judicial infliction by the Deity. But this solemn view of the subject is in no degree inconsistent with the principle, that it takes place according to a chain of sequences existing in the mind itself. For the Almighty One, who is said to inflict as a judgment this state of moral ruin, is the same who established it as the result of a uniform process in the mental economy, to be traced in the history of every man who has followed the downward course which led him astray from virtue.

To the principles which have now been stated,

we are also to refer a point in the philosophy of human nature which presents a subject of most interesting reflection. I allude to the fact, that the great truths of religious belief are so often rejected, by men who have acquired a reputation for exalted powers of understanding, in other departments of intellectual inquiry. The fact is one of intense interest; and we can scarcely wonder that superficial observers should have deduced from it an impression, that it implies something defective in the evidence by which these truths are proposed to our reception. But the conclusion is entirely unwarranted; and the important principle cannot be too often repeated, that the attainment of truth in moral inquiries is essentially connected with the moral condition of the inquirer. On this depends the anxious care with which he has directed his mind to the high pursuit, under a deep and solemn feeling of its supreme importance. On this depends the sincere and humble and candid love of truth with which he has conducted it, apart alike from prejudice and frivolity. For without these essential elements of character, the most exalted intellect may fail of reaching the truth,—the most acute understanding may only wander into delusion and falsehood.

Before concluding this subject, there is another point which deserves to be alluded to ;—namely, the influence produced upon all our moral decisions by Attention. This important process of the mind we have had occasion to mention in various parts of our inquiry. It consists, as we have seen, in directing the thoughts, calmly and deliberately, to all the facts and considerations by which we ought to be influenced in the particular case which is under our view ; and it should be accompanied by an anxious and sincere desire to be guided, both in our opinions and conduct, by the true and relative tendency of each of them. It is a voluntary process of the mind which every man has the power to perform ; and, on the degree in which it is habitually exercised, depend some of the great differences between one man and another in their moral condition. We have repeatedly had occasion to mention that morbid state of the mind, in which moral causes seem to have lost their proper influence, both on the volitions of the will and even on the decisions of the judgment :—but it is a truth which cannot be too often referred to, how much this condition is influenced by the mental process which we are now considering. It originates, indeed, in some degree of that distortion

of moral feeling, in consequence of which the inclinations wander from the strict path of rectitude;—but the primary effect of this loss of mental harmony, and that by which it is perpetuated, appears to be chiefly a habitual misdirection of the attention,—or a total want of consideration of the truths and motives, by which the moral judgments and decisions ought to be influenced. Apart from this condition of the mind, indeed, there is reason to believe, that the actual differences in moral judgment are in different men less than we are apt to imagine. "Let any honest man," says Butler, "before he engages in any course of action, ask himself,—is this I am going to do right, or is it wrong,—is it good, or is it evil? I do not in the least doubt but that these questions would be answered agreeably to truth and virtue, by almost any fair man in almost any circumstances."—It is in a great measure from the want of this simple exercise of attention, or of what in common language we call calm reflection, that men are led away, by passion, prejudice, and distorted moral habits, into courses of action which their own sober judgment would condemn;—and, when a man, who has thus departed from rectitude, begins to retrace his way, the first great point is that

where he pauses in his downward career, and seriously proposes to himself the question, whether the course he has followed be worthy of a moral being. I allude not here to the means by which a man is led to take this momentous step in his moral history, but only to the mental process of which it consists. It is primarily nothing more than an exercise of attention, calmly and deliberately directed to the truths and considerations by which his moral decisions ought to be influenced ;—but, when a man has once been brought into this attitude of deep and serious thought, conscience comes to bear its part in the solemn process ; and the inquirer is likely to arrive at just conclusions on those great questions of which he feels the importance to his moral condition.

Before leaving the subject of the Moral Principle, there are two points closely connected with it which remain to be noticed. The one relates to the origin and immutability of moral distinctions,—and, in connexion with this, a class of speculations which hold a conspicuous place in

the history of Ethical science, under the name of Theories of Morals. The other refers to a certain harmony or principle of arrangement, which the different moral feelings ought to preserve towards each other in a well-regulated mind.

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§ I.—OF THE ORIGIN AND IMMUTABILITY OF MORAL DISTINCTIONS AND THEORIES OF MORALS.

In treating of the moral powers, I have considered various feelings as distinct parts of our constitution, each intended to answer a specific purpose in the present scene of moral discipline. I am aware of an objection that may be urged against this mode of viewing the subject,—namely, that it is an unnecessary multiplication of original principles. I am not inclined to dispute respecting the term, *original principles*. I only contend for the fact, that there are certain feelings or propensities which are found to operate in the whole of mankind; and, with regard to these, I consider our object to be, simply to view man as he is. In his physical relations, we find him endowed

with a variety of senses, and a great variety of bodily functions,—each adapted to its proper purpose, and all distinct from each other; and the physiologist is content to view them simply as they are. Were he to exercise his ingenuity upon them, he might contend with much plausibility, that it is highly incorrect to speak of five distinct and separate senses;—for that they are all merely modifications of sensation, differing only in the various kinds of the external impression. Thus, what is vulgarly called sight is, the simple sensation of light,—and hearing is merely the sensation of sound. This would be all very true,—but it does not appear to elucidate the subject; nor, by any ingenuity of such speculation, could we be enabled to know more concerning these senses than when we called them sight and hearing. In the same manner, it would appear, that the course of inquiry, respecting our moral feelings, is simply to observe what these feelings really are; and what are their obvious tendencies in an uncontaminated mind. When we have done so on adequate foundation, I conceive we have every reason for considering them as principles implanted in us by the Creator, for our guidance in our present relations; and, like the functions of our bodies,

so the powers and feelings of our minds show a wonderful adaptation and design, worthy of their Omnipotent cause. But, we can know nothing of them beyond the facts,—and nothing is to be gained by any attempt, however ingenious, to simplify or explain them. We have formerly had occasion to allude to various speculations, of a similar character, respecting the powers of perception and simple intellect,—all of which have now given way before the general admission of the truth, that, on the questions to which they refer, no human sagacity can carry us one step beyond the simple knowledge of the facts.

It will probably be admitted, that there have been many similar unprofitable speculations in the philosophy of the moral feelings; and that these speculations, instead of throwing any light upon the subject, have tended rather to withdraw the attention of inquirers from the questions of deep and serious importance connected with the investigation. Among these, perhaps, we may reckon some of the doctrines which hold a prominent place in the history of this branch of science,—under the name of *Theories of Morals*. These doctrines agree in admitting the fact, that there are among mankind certain notions respecting right and wrong,—moral and

immoral actions; and they then profess to account for these impressions,—or to explain how men come to think one action right and another wrong. A brief view of these theories may properly belong to an outline of this department of science.

In contemplating the conduct of men as placed in certain relations towards each other, we perceive some actions which we pronounce to be right, and others which we pronounce to be wrong. In forming our opinion of them in this manner, we refer to the intentions of the actor, and, if we are satisfied that he really intended what we see to be the effect or the tendency of his conduct, or even that he purposed something which he was prevented from accomplishing, we view him with feelings of moral approbation or disapprobation,—or, in other words, apply to him the award of praise or blame. Such is our simple idea of virtue or vice, as applied either to the act or the agent. We have a conviction that there is a line of conduct to which ourselves and others are bound by a certain kind of obligation;—a departure from this constitutes moral demerit or vice;—a correct observance of it constitutes virtue.

This appears to be the simple view of our primary impression of vice and virtue. The next question is, what is the origin of the impression, or on what ground is it that we conclude certain actions to be right and others wrong? Is it merely from a view of their consequences to ourselves or others; or do we proceed upon an absolute conviction of certain conduct being right, and certain other wrong, without carrying the mind farther than the simple act, or the simple intention of the actor,—without any consideration of the effects or the tendencies of the action. This is the question which has been so keenly agitated in the speculations of Ethical science, namely, respecting the origin and nature of moral distinctions. On the one hand, it is contended, that these moral impressions are in themselves immutable, and that an absolute conviction of their immutability is fixed upon us, in that part of our constitution which we call conscience; in other words, there is a certain conduct to which we are bound by a feeling of obligation, apart from all other considerations whatever; and we have an impression that a departure from this in ourselves or others constitutes vice. On the other hand, it is maintained, that these distinctions are entirely arbitrary, or

arise out of circumstances, so that what is vice in one case may be virtue in another. Those who have adopted the latter hypothesis have next to explain, what the circumstances are which give rise, in this manner, to our impressions of vice and virtue, moral approbation or disapprobation. The various modes of explaining this impression have led to the *Theories of Morals.*

The system of Mandeville ascribes our impressions of moral rectitude entirely to the enactments of legislators. Man, he says, naturally seeks only his own gratification, without any regard to the happiness of other men. But legislators found that it would be necessary to induce him, in some way, to surrender a portion of his personal gratification for the good of others, and so to promote the peace and harmony of society. To accomplish this with such a selfish being, it was necessary to give him some equivalent for the sacrifice he thus made; and the principle of his nature which they fixed upon, for this purpose, was his love of praise. They made certain laws for the general good, and then flattered mankind into the belief that it was praiseworthy to observe them, and noble to sacrifice a certain degree of their own gratification for the good of

others. What we call virtue thus resolves itself into the love of praise. In regard to such a system as this, it has been thought sufficient to point out the distinction, between the immutable principles of morality and those arrangements which are dependant upon mere enactment. Such are many of the regulations and restrictions of commerce. They are intended for the public good, and, while they are in force, it is the duty of every good citizen to obey them. A change of the law, however, changes their character, for they possess in themselves none of the qualities of merit or demerit. But no laws can alter, and no statutes modify, those great principles of moral conduct which are graved indelibly on the conscience of all classes of men. Kings, it has been said, may make laws, but cannot create a virtue.

By another modification of this system, our impressions of virtue and vice are said to be derived entirely from mutual compact. Men, finding that there was a certain course of action which would contribute to their mutual advantage, and *vice versa*, entered into an agreement to observe certain conduct, and abstain from certain other. The violation of this compact constituted vice, the observance of it virtue.

By a theory, supported by some eminent men, as Clarke and Wollaston, virtue was considered to depend on a conformity of the conduct to a certain sense of the fitness of things,—or the truth of things. The meaning of this, it must be confessed, is rather obscure. It however evidently refers the essence of virtue to a relation perceived by a process of reason; and therefore may be held as at variance with the belief of the impression being universal.

According to the *Theory of Utility*, as warmly supported by Mr. Hume, we estimate the virtue of an action and an agent entirely by their usefulness. He seems to refer all our mental impressions to two principles, reason and taste. Reason gives us simply the knowledge of truth or falsehood, and is no motive of action. Taste gives an impression of pleasure or pain, and so constitutes happiness or misery, and becomes a motive of action. To this he refers our impressions of beauty and deformity, vice and virtue. He has, accordingly, distinctly asserted that the words right and wrong signify nothing more than sweet or sour, pleasant or painful, being only effects upon the mind of the spectator produced by the contemplation of certain conduct,—and this, as we have already seen,

resolves itself into the impression of its usefulness. An obvious objection to the system of utility was, that it might be applied to the effects of inanimate matter as correctly as to the deeds of a voluntary agent. A printing-press or a steam-engine might be as meritorious as a man of extensive virtue. To obviate this, Mr. Hume was driven to a distinction, which in fact amounted to giving up the doctrine, namely, that the sense of utility must be combined with a feeling of approbation. This leads us back to the previous question, on what this feeling of approbation is founded, and at once recognises a principle, distinct from the mere perception of utility. Virtuous conduct may indeed always contribute to general utility, or general happiness; but this is an effect only, not the cause or the principle which constitutes it virtuous. This important distinction has been well stated by Professor Mills of Oxford. He defines morality to be,—"an obedience to the law and constitution of man's nature, assigned him by the Deity in conformity to his own essential and unchangeable attributes, the effect of which is the general happiness of his creatures."*

* Lecture on the Theory of Moral Obligation. Oxford, 1830.

We come now to the *Selfish System* of morals, according to which the fundamental principle of the conduct of mankind is a desire to promote their own gratification or interest. This theory has appeared in various forms, from a very early period in the history of Ethical science; but the most remarkable promoter of it in more modern times was Mr. Hobbes. According to him, man is influenced entirely by what seems calculated, more immediately, or more remotely, to promote his own interest; whatever does so, he considers as right,—the opposite as wrong. He is driven to society by necessity, and then, whatever promotes the general good he considers as ultimately calculated to promote his own. This system is founded upon a fallacy, similar to that referred to under the former head. Virtuous conduct does impart gratification, and that of the highest kind; and, in the strictest sense of the word, it promotes the true interest of the agent; but this tendency is the effect, not the cause; and never can be considered as the principle which imparts to conduct its character of virtue; nor do we perform it merely because it affords us gratification, or promotes our interest. The hypothesis, indeed, may be considered as distinctly contradicted by facts,—for, even in our

own experience, it is clear, that the pleasure attending an act of generosity or virtue in ourselves, as well as our approbation of it in others, is diminished or destroyed by the impression, that there was a selfish purpose to answer by it.

There is a modification of the selfish system which attempts to get rid of its more offensive aspect by a singular and circuitous chain of moral emotions. We have experienced, it is said, that a certain attention to the comfort or advantage of others contributes to our own. A kind of habit is thus formed, by which we come at last to seek the happiness of others for their own sake;—so that, by this process, actions, which at first were considered only as inexpedient, from being opposed to self-love, at length and insensibly come to be considered as immoral. This can be considered as nothing more than an ingenious play upon words, and deserves only to be mentioned as a historical fact, in a view of those speculations by which this important subject has been obscured and bewildered.

Another modification of the theories of morals remains to be mentioned;—namely, that of the distinguished Paley. This eminent writer is decidedly opposed to the doctrine of a moral sense

or moral principle; but the system which he proposes to substitute in its place must be acknowledged to be liable to considerable objections. He commences with the proposition that virtue is doing good to mankind, in obedience to the will of God, and for the sake of everlasting happiness. The good of mankind, therefore, is the subject,—the will of God, the rule,—and everlasting happiness, the motive of human virtue. The will of God, he subsequently goes on to show, is made known to us, partly by revelation, and partly by what we discover of his designs and dispositions from his works, or, as we usually call it, the light of nature. From this last source he thinks it is clearly to be inferred, that God wills and wishes the happiness of his creatures; —consequently actions which promote that will and wish must be agreeable to him, and the contrary. The method of ascertaining the will of God concerning any action, by the light of nature, therefore, is, to inquire into the tendency of the action to promote or diminish general happiness. Proceeding on these grounds, he then arrives at the conclusion, that whatever is expedient is right; and that it is the utility of any moral rule alone, which constitutes the obligation of it. In his farther elucidation of this theory,

Dr. Paley admits, that an action may be useful, in an individual case, which is not right. To constitute it right, it is necessary that it shall be "expedient upon the whole,—at the long run, in all its effects, collateral and remote, as well as those which are immediate and direct."

Without entering on the various peculiarities of this system, there are two considerations which appear to be serious objections to it as a doctrine to be applied to practical purposes. (1.) If we suppose a man deliberating respecting an action, which he perceives would be eminently expedient and useful in an individual case, and which he feels to be highly desirable in its immediate reference to that case;—we may naturally ask whether he is in a likely condition to find his way to a sound conclusion respecting the consequences of the action "upon the whole, at the long run, in all its consequences, remote and collateral."—It may certainly be doubted, whether, in any case, there is not great danger of differences of opinion arising respecting this extended and ultimate expediency of an action;—and in particular, whether, in the man now referred to, the very circumstances of his perception of great and immediate utility, and the state of desire connected with it, do not constitute a moral con-

dition which might interfere, in a very material degree, with his calculation as to its ultimate expediency. (2.) Independently of this consideration, we may be allowed to doubt, whether any human being can arrive at such an extensive knowledge, as this theory seems to render necessary, of all the consequences of an action, remote and collateral. This would appear to constitute a kind and a degree of knowledge to be found only in the Omniscience of the Deity.

If these observations are well-founded, I think we cannot hesitate to maintain, that, on such a nice calculation of consequences, it is impossible to found a rule of morals in any degree adapted to the necessities of man. The same objection applies to every doctrine which does not recognise the supreme authority of conscience as an original part of our moral constitution, warning us of certain conduct as immutably right, and certain other conduct as immutably wrong, without any regard either to our own advantage, or to our judgment of the tendency of the deeds. Whenever we depart from this great principle, we reduce every moral decision to what must primarily be a process of reasoning, and in which, consequently, there may be differences of opinion respecting the tendency of actions, instead of that

absolute conviction which the deep importance of the subject renders indispensable. It may, farther, be confidently stated as a matter of fact, that a conscientious man, in considering an action which involves a point of moral duty, does not enter upon any such calculation of its consequences. He simply asks himself,—is it right?—and so decides, according to an impulse within which he feels to be a part of his moral constitution, susceptible of no explanation, and not admitting of being referred to any other principle.

The foundation of all these *Theories of Morals*, then, seems to be the impression, that there is nothing right or wrong, just or unjust in itself; but that our ideas of right and wrong, justice and injustice, arise either from actual law or mutual compact,—or from our view of the tendencies of actions. There is another modification of these theories, but liable to similar objection, which ascribes the origin of right and wrong directly to the will of the Deity, and holds that there is nothing wrong which might not have been right, if he had so ordained it. By the immutability of moral distinctions, as opposed to all these theories, we mean,—that there are certain actions which are immutably right, and

which we are bound in duty to perform, and certain actions which are immutably wrong, apart from any other consideration whatever;—and that an absolute conviction of this is fixed upon us, in the moral principle or conscience, independently of knowledge derived from any other source respecting the will or laws of the Almighty. By this system, therefore, which refers our moral impressions to the supreme authority of conscience, a principle is disclosed, which, independently even of revelation, not only establishes an absolute conviction of the laws of moral rectitude, but leads us to the impression of moral responsibility and a moral Governor, and, as immediately flowing from this, a state of future retribution. We have already shown this to accord with the declarations of the sacred writings, and it is evidently the only system on which we can account for that uniformity of moral sentiment which is absolutely required for the harmonies of society. For it is, in fact, on a conviction of the immutability of this feeling in ourselves,—and of the existence of a similar and universal principle in others,—that is founded all the mutual confidence which keeps mankind together. It is this reciprocity of moral feeling that proves a constant check upon the conduct of men in the daily trans-

actions of life; but, to answer this purpose, there is evidently required an impression of its uniformity,—or a conviction that the actions, which we disapprove in others, will be condemned in us by the unanimous decision of other men. It is equally clear that we have no such impression of a uniformity of sentiment on any other subject, except on those referable to the class of first truths; and this immediately indicates a marked distinction between our moral impressions, and any of those conclusions at which we arrive by a process of the understanding. It is clear, also, that this uniformity can arise from no system, which either refers us directly to the will of God, or is liable to be affected by the differences which may exist in the judgment, the moral taste, the personal feelings, or the interests, of different individuals. It must be, in itself, fixed and immutable, conveying an absolute conviction which admits of no doubt and no difference of opinion. Such is the great principle of conscience. However its warnings may be neglected, and its influence obscured by passion and moral degradation, it still asserts its right to govern the whole man. "Had it strength," says Butler, "as it had right; had it power, as it had

manifest authority, it would absolutely govern the world."

It remains only that we briefly notice the system of Dr. Adam Smith, commonly called the theory of Sympathy. According to this ingenious writer, it is required for our moral sentiments respecting an action, that we enter into the feelings both of the agent, and of him to whom the action relates. If we sympathize with the feelings and intentions of the agent, we approve of his conduct as right,—if not, we consider it as wrong. If, in the individual to whom the action refers, we sympathize with a feeling of gratitude, we regard the agent as worthy of praise,—if with a feeling of resentment, the contrary. We thus observe our feelings respecting the conduct of others, in cases in which we are not personally concerned,—then apply these rules to ourselves; and thus judge of our own conduct. This very obvious statement, however, of what every man feels, does not supply the place of a fundamental rule of right and wrong; and indeed Dr. Smith does not appear to contend that it does so. It applies only to the application of a principle, not to the origin of it. Our sympathy can never be supposed to constitute an action

right or wrong; but it enables us to apply to individual cases a principle of right and wrong derived from another source;—and to clear our judgment in doing so, from the blinding influence of those selfish feelings by which we are so apt to be misled when we apply it directly to ourselves. In estimating our own conduct we then apply to it those conclusions which we have made with regard to the conduct of others,—or we imagine others applying the same process in regard to us, and consider how our conduct would appear to an impartial observer.

In regard to the whole of this subject, an important distinction is to be made between the fundamental principle, from which actions derive their character of right and wrong,—and the application of reason in judging of their tendencies. Before concluding this part of the subject, therefore, we have to add a very few observations on the influence exerted on our moral decisions by reason,—always however in subserviency to the great principle of conscience. The office of reason appears to be, in the first place, to judge of the expediency, propriety, and consequences of actions, which do not involve any feeling of moral duty. In regard to the affections, again, a

process of reason is often necessary, not only respecting the best mode of exercising them, but also in many cases, in deciding whether we shall exercise them at all. Thus, we may feel compassion in a particular instance, but perceive the individual to be so unworthy, that what we could do would be of no benefit to him. In such a case we may feel it to be a matter not only of prudence, but of duty, to resist the affection, and to reserve the aid we have to bestow for persons more deserving.

In cases in which an impression of moral duty is concerned, an exercise of reason is still, in many instances, necessary for enabling us to adapt our means to the end which we desire to accomplish. We may feel an anxious wish to promote the interest or relieve the distress of another, or to perform some high and important duty,—but call reason to our aid respecting the most effectual and the most judicious means of doing so. Conscience, in such cases, produces the intention,—reason suggests the means:—and it is familiar to every one that these do not always harmonize. Thus a man may be sound in his intentions, who errs in judgment respecting the means for carrying them into effect. In such cases, we attach our feeling of moral approba-

tion to the intention only;—we say the man meant well, but erred in judgment;—and to this error we affix no feeling of moral disapprobation,—unless, perhaps, in some cases, we may blame him for acting precipitately on his own judgment, instead of taking the advice of those qualified to direct him. We expect such a man to acquire wisdom from experience, by observing the deficiency of his judgment in reference to his intentions;—and, in future instances, to learn to take advice. There are other circumstances in which an exercise of reason is frequently brought into action in regard to moral decisions;—as in some cases in which one duty appears to interfere with another;—likewise in judging whether, in particular instances, any rule of duty is concerned, or whether we are at liberty to take up the case simply as one of expediency or utility. In making their decisions in doubtful cases, we observe great differences in the habits of judging in different individuals. One shows the most minute and scrupulous anxiety to discover whether the case involves any principle of duty,—and a similar anxiety in acting suitably when he has discovered it. This is what we call a strictly conscientious man. Another, who shows no want of a proper sense of duty when the line is

clearly drawn, has less anxiety in such cases as these, and may sacrifice minute or doubtful points to some other feeling,—as self-interest, or even friendship,—where the former individual might have discovered a principle of duty.

Reason is also concerned in judging of a description of cases in which a modification of moral feeling arises from the complexity of actions,—or, in other words, from the circumstances in which the individual is placed. This may be illustrated by the difference of moral sentiment which we attach to the act of taking away the life of another,—when this is done, by an individual under the impulse of revenge,—by the same individual in self-defence,—or by a judge in the discharge of his public duty.

There is still another office frequently assigned to Reason in moral decisions,—as when we speak of a man acting upon Reason as opposed to passion. This however is, correctly speaking, only a different use of the term; and it means that he acts upon a calm consideration of the motives by which he ought to be influenced, instead of being hurried away by a desire or an affection which has been allowed to usurp undue influence.

The important distinction, therefore, which these observations have been intended to illus-

trate, may be briefly recapitulated in the following manner. The aspect of actions, as right or wrong, is founded upon a principle in the human mind entirely distinct from a simple exercise of reason,—and the standard of moral rectitude derived from this source is, in its own nature, fixed and immutable. But there are many cases in which an exercise of reason may be employed in referring particular actions to this standard, or trying them, as it were, by means of it. Any such mental process, however, is only to be considered as a kind of test applied to individual instances, and must not be confounded with the standard to which it is the office of this test to refer them. Right or virtuous conduct does, in point of fact, contribute to general utility, as well as to the advantage of the individual, in the true and extended sense of that term, and these tendencies are perceived by Reason. But it is neither of these that constitutes it right. This is founded entirely on a different principle,—the immutable rule of moral rectitude; it is perceived by a different part of our constitution,—the moral principle, or conscience; and, by the operation of this principle, we pronounce it right, without any reference to its consequences either to ourselves or others.

§ II. OF THE HARMONY OF THE MORAL FEELINGS.

On whatever system we may consider the moral feelings, we perceive that there are various classes of them,—each answering a special purpose in our various relations as accountable beings. Some of them, we have seen, relate to objects of desire, the attainment of which appears likely to bring satisfaction. Others lead us to those relations which we bear to our fellow-men. A third class, which remains to be considered, calls our attention to the relation in which we stand to the moral governor of the universe, and to a certain regulation of the moral feelings arising out of this relation. But there is still another inquiry of the deepest interest, connected with this subject, namely, regarding the harmony or principle of arrangement, which these various classes of moral emotions ought to bear towards each other. They all form parts of our constitution, and deserve a certain degree of attention, which must be carefully adapted to the relative importance of each; and the correct adjustment of this harmony is one of the objects to be answered by the moral principle, combined with a sound exercise of judg-

ment. The rules which apply to it may be stated in the following manner.

When we consider man as an immortal being, passing through a course of discipline to another state of existence, it is obvious that his highest consideration is his own moral condition, and the aspect in which he stands towards the Deity. In immediate connexion with this first of all concerns are the great and general principles of justice and veracity, as referring to our connexion with all mankind, and a class of private responsibilities which peculiarly regard each individual in his domestic relations; such as the duties of children to their parents, and parents to their children;—the latter, particularly, presenting a class of the most solemn kind, as it embraces the concerns of the present life, and of that which is to come. Then follow the duties of benevolence, friendship, and patriotism; after these, the ordinary avocations of life, as the acquisition of knowledge and the pursuits of business; and, finally, those personal recreations and enjoyments, which, when kept in their proper place, are legitimate and necessary to every human being. These are all proper and laudable, provided they are kept in a proper subserviency to each other. But the important consideration is, that a man may be act-

ing unworthily of his moral nature, when he devotes himself to any one of them in a manner which encroaches upon the harmony of the whole.

To begin with the lowest of them, it is unnecessary to state, how this remark applies to the man whose life is devoted to pursuits, which rank no higher than recreation or amusement. It must be obvious to every one of the smallest degree of reflection, that such a man is living only for the present life. What cannot be denied of mere amusement must also be admitted respecting a life of business, however important in themselves the concerns may be which engross the mind. They still refer only to present things, and carry not the thoughts beyond the moment which bounds the period of moral discipline. Even the engagements of benevolence and public usefulness, estimable as they are, may be allowed to usurp an improper place; and they do so, if they withdraw the attention from responsibilities and duties which belong more particularly to ourselves as individuals—such as the duties of parents and of children,—and the other claims which arise out of the relations of domestic life. Finally, it is ever to be kept in mind, that no engagements of any description must be allowed to interfere with obligations, of the highest interest to

every man,—those which relate to his own moral condition, in the sight of Him who is now his witness, and will soon be his Judge. From want of due attention to this consideration, year after year glides over us, and life hastens to its close, amid cares and toils and anxieties which relate only to the present world. Thus, fame may be acquired, or wealth accumulated; or, after a laborious ascent, a man may have gained the height of ambition,—when the truth bursts upon him that life is nearly over, while its great business is yet to begin,—the preparation of the moral being for an eternal existence.

It is scarcely necessary to add, on the other hand, that attention to this first of all concerns must not be allowed to estrange the mind from the various duties and responsibilities of active life. It is only, indeed, when the conduct is regulated by partial and unsound motives, that some of these objects of attention are allowed to usurp the place of others. He who acts, not from the high principles of moral duty, but from a desire of notoriety, or the applause of man, may devote himself to much benevolence and usefulness of a public and ostensible kind; while he neglects duties of a higher, though more private nature,—and overlooks entirely, it may be, his own mo-

ral condition. The ascetic, on the other hand, shuts himself up in his cell, and imagines that he pleases God by meditation and voluntary austerities. But this is not the part of him who truly feels his varied relations, and correctly estimates his true responsibilities.—It is striking, also, to remark, how the highest principles lead to a character of harmony and consistency, which all inferior motives fail entirely in producing. The man, who estimates most deeply and correctly his own moral relations to an ever-present and presiding Deity, will also feel his way through the various duties of life, with a degree of attention adapted to each of them. In the retirements of domestic life, he is found in the anxious discharge of the high responsibilities which arise out of its relations. He is found in the path of private benevolence and public usefulness, manifesting the kind and brotherly interest of one who acts on the purest of all motives,—the love of God, and a principle of devotedness to his service. Whether exposed to the view of his fellowmen, or seen only by Him who seeth in secret, his conduct is the same,—for the principles on which he acts have, in both situations, equal influence. In the ordinary concerns of life, the power of these principles is equally obvious.

Whether he engage in its business, or partake of its enjoyments;—whether he encounter its difficulties, or meet its pains, disappointments, and sorrows,—he walks through the whole with the calm dignity of one who views all the events of the present life, in their immediate reference to a life which is to come.

The high consistency of character, which results from this regulated condition of the moral feelings, tends thus to promote a due attention to the various responsibilities connected with the situation in which the individual is placed. It does so by leading him, with anxious consideration, to feel his way through these requirements, and to recognise the supreme authority of conscience over his whole moral system. It does so, especially, by habitually raising his views to the eternal One, who is the witness of all his conduct, and to whom he is responsible for his actions in each relation of life. It thus tends to preserve him from all those partial and inconsistent courses, into which men are led by the mere desire of approbation, or love of distinction, or by any other of those inferior motives which are really resolvable into self-love.

Such uniformity of moral feeling is equally op-

posed to another distortion of character, not less at variance with a sound condition of the mind. This is what may be called religious pretension, shewing itself by much zeal for particular opinions and certain external observances, while there is no corresponding influence upon the moral feelings and the character. The truths, which form the great object of religious belief, are of so momentous a kind, that, when they are really believed, they cannot fail to produce effects of the most decided and most extensive nature;—and, where this influence is not steadily exhibited, there is a fatal error in the moral economy,—there is either self-deception, or an intention to deceive others. From such inconsistency of character arises an evil, which has a most injurious influence upon two descriptions of persons. Those of one class are led to assign an undue importance to the profession of a peculiar creed and the mere externals of religion,—to certain observances which are considered as characteristic of a particular party, and to abstinence from certain indulgences or pursuits which that party disapprove. Those of the other class, finding, in many instances, much zeal for these peculiarities, without a state of moral feeling adapted to the truths which are professed, are apt to

consider the whole as either pretence or delusion.

In their mutual error there is to both matter of important warning. It becomes the latter to beware, lest, misled by the failings of weak or inconsistent men, they withdraw their attention from truths of solemn import to themselves as moral beings. There may be much pretension where there is no real feeling; but are they from this entitled to infer, that there is not a reality in that which these pretenders counterfeit. By a slight gilding, articles of trifling value are made to assume the appearance of gold; but would it be reasonable to contend, that there are no articles of intrinsic worth which these are made to imitate. The fair induction is, in both instances, the opposite. Were there no such articles of pure gold, this ingenuity would not be employed in fabricating base imitations; and the hypocrite would not assume qualities he does not possess, were there not real virtues, from a resemblance to which he hopes to procure for his character that ostensible value which may enable it to deceive. But let those who have detected this deception beware of founding upon it conclusions which it does not warrant. They have not found the reality here, but there is not the less a pure

and high standard which claims their utmost regard. If they search for it either among inconsistent or among designing men, they seek the living among the dead. Let them contemplate it especially as it is displayed in the character of the Messiah; in him it was exhibited in a manner which demands the imitation of every rational man, while it challenges the cordial assent of the most acute understanding, that this is the perfection of a moral being.

On the other hand, let those who profess to be influenced by the highest of all motives, study to exhibit their habitual influence in a consistent uniformity of the whole character. It is easy to acquire a peculiar phraseology, to shew much zeal for peculiar opinions, and rigid attention to peculiar observances; and, among a party, it is not difficult to procure a name, by condemning certain other compliances which by them are technically styled the manners of the world. But all this, it is evident, may be assumed; it may be, and probably often is, no better than a name; it often amounts to nothing more than substituting one kind of excitement for another, while the moral being continues unchanged. True religion is seated in the heart, and sends out from thence a purifying influence over the whole cha-

racter. In its essential nature it is a contest within, open only to the eye of Him who seeth in secret. It seeks not, therefore, the applause of men; and it shrinks from that spurious religionism whose prominent characters are talk, and pretension, and external observance, often accompanied by uncharitable censure. Like its divine pattern, it is meek and lowly,—"it is pure and peaceable, gentle and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and of good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy." It aims not at an ostentatious display of principles, but a steady exhibition of fruits. Qualities which it cultivates with especial care, are humility, and charity, and mercy,—the mortification of every selfish passion, and the denial of every selfish indulgence. When thus exhibited in its true and genuine characters, it commands the respect of every sound understanding, and challenges the assent of all to its reality and its truth, as the highest principle that can regulate the conduct of a moral being.

PART IV.

OF THE MORAL RELATION OF MAN TOWARDS THE DEITY.

THE healthy state of a moral being is strikingly referred, in the sacred writings, to three great heads,—justice,—benevolence,—and a conformity of the moral feelings to a reverential sense of the presence and perfections of the Deity;—"to do justly,—to love mercy,—and to walk humbly with thy God." The two former of these topics lead us to the duties which a man owes to his fellow-men;—the latter calls our attention to that homage of the mind and of the heart which he owes peculiarly to God. For the duties of the former class we are equally responsible to Him as the moral governor of the universe, but their immediate reference is

to our connexions with other men;—those of the latter class respect our relation to the Deity himself, and consequently consist, in a great measure, in the purity and devotedness of the mind. In human systems of ethics, attention has been chiefly directed to the obligations of social and relative morality;—but the two classes are closely associated in the sacred writings; and the sound condition of the moral feelings is pointed out as that acquirement which, along with a corresponding integrity of character, qualifies man, in an especial manner, for intercourse with the Deity. "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord, or who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands and a pure heart, who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully."—"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

Such declarations challenge the assent and absolute conviction of every sound understanding. Are we, as responsible creatures, placed in immediate relation to a great moral governor, a being of infinite purity and boundless perfections:—Is the structure of our bodies, and the still more wonderful fabric of our minds, alike the work of his hand:—Then it is impossible to put away from us the impression,—that each

movement of these minds must be fully exposed to his inspection. It is equally impossible to repel from us the solemn truth,—that it is by the desires,—the feelings,—and the motives of action which exist there, that our condition is to be estimated in his sight,—and that a man, whose conduct to his fellow-men does not violate propriety and justice, may be in a state of moral degradation in the eyes of him who seeth in secret; —"for," says the sacred writer, "man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart."

There cannot, therefore, be an inquiry of more intense interest, than what is that condition of the heart and of the mind which every man ought to seek after, when he considers himself as exposed to the continual inspection of the Almighty. It may, perhaps, be briefly referred to the following heads.

I. A habitual effort to cultivate a sense of the divine presence,—and a habitual desire to have the whole moral condition regulated by this impression. It implies, therefore, sacred respect to the character of the Deity, and is opposed to every kind of profaneness, or aught by which one might weaken, in himself or others, the reverential feel-

ing due towards the character, and even the name of the Almighty. This must be extended not to the outward conduct alone, but to the desires and affections of the heart. There is a state of mind, formerly referred to, in which a desire, which the moral feelings disapprove, may not be followed by volition; while the desire is still indulged, and the mind is allowed to cherish it with some feeling of regret, or even to luxuriate with a sense of pleasure in the imaginary gratification. In the same manner, a malevolent affection to our fellow-men may be checked from producing injurious conduct, while the feeling still rankles in the heart, in the form of envy or hatred. These mental conditions, while they are widely at variance with the healthy state of a rational and responsible being, must be regarded by the Deity as constituting moral guilt and moral degradation. Nor is it only on the mind, which cherishes malevolent passions and impure desires and imaginations, that the Holy One must look with a feeling of condemnation. There may be another mental condition in which the thoughts and desires are directed to transient and frivolous objects, and thus run to waste amid the trifles of the passing hour, without any feeling of the truths and motives which demand the atten-

tion of moral beings. The pursuits of such a man may have nothing in them that is referable either to impure desire or malevolent affection. They may be the acquisition of wealth,—the grasp after power,—the love of distinction,—or a devotedness to merely trivial occupations;—while there is a total neglect of those great concerns which really demand our chief and highest regard. Amid the legitimate and even the laudable pursuits of ordinary life, we are too apt to lose sight of those duties and responsibilities which attend a state of moral discipline,—and that culture of the soul required as a preparation for the future state of existence to which we are hastening. But we cannot doubt that these considerations bear an important aspect in the eye of the Deity; and that the mind in which they hold not a habitual influence is contemplated by him as in a state of moral destitution.

There are, accordingly, two classes of characters clearly pointed out in the sacred writings,—namely, one in whom the conduct indicates the depravity within,—and another, in whom the external character preserves a respectable aspect in the estimation of men, while the moral feelings are in a corrupted condition in the sight of the Deity. We have formerly endeavoured to trace

the laws to which this fact is to be referred, on the principles of the philosophy of the human mind:—they are chiefly two. (1.) We have seen that there are original principles in our nature which lead to a certain exercise of justice, veracity, and benevolence, independently of any recognition of divine authority. They are a part of our moral constitution, and calculated to promote important purposes in the harmony of human society; and they carry along with them a certain principle of reciprocal compensation, which is entirely distinct from any impression of their moral aspect. The man who is deficient in them, indeed, incurs guilt; but a certain discharge of them may arise from mere natural, or even selfish feeling, unconnected with any sense of responsibility; and this consequently conveys no impression of moral approbation. In the very exercise of them a man receives his reward, partly by a feeling of satisfaction, which, from the constitution of his nature, they are calculated to yield, and partly as a member of that community where they promote peace, and order, and harmony; and he is not entitled to look farther, or to claim from them any feeling of merit in the sight of the Deity. (2.) A second principle, which bears an important relation to this subject,

is the manner in which a man's character is influenced by the particular motive or pursuit to which he has resigned the guidance of his conduct. One surrenders himself to the animal propensities, and becomes a selfish profligate, insensible to every right principle of action, while his depraved condition is obvious to all around him. A second devotes himself to ambition;—and a third to avarice:—These ruling passions, it may be, are found to be adverse to the selfish indulgence and open profligacy of the former; —and a character may arise out of them distinguished by much that is decent, and respectable, and worthy of approbation in the eye of man. In a fourth, the ruling motive may be the desire of esteem and approbation; and this may, and often does, become a principle of such influence, as to overpower, in a great measure, the selfish propensities, and to produce a character estimable not only for justice and veracity, but a high degree of active benevolence. Such a man sacrifices to his ruling passion much that might be turned to the purposes of ambition, avarice, or selfish indulgence, by those who are guided by these propensities; and in doing so, he has his reward. He finds it in the gratification of that principle which in him has become

predominant; and, rather than hazard the loss of esteem by those whose approbation he values, he will submit to much personal exertion, and sacrifice much selfish advantage, which others might deem highly worthy of attainment. But all this may go on without any recognition of divine authority; and may all exist in a man in whom there is much impurity of desire, and much deficiency of moral feeling. It is all referable to a motive of a personal nature, and in the gratification of this his ruling principle is satisfied.

The state of mind which is under the influence of a habitual sense of the divine presence may, therefore, be considered under two relations,—the one referring more immediately to the Deity,—the other to our fellow-men. The former seems chiefly to include an effort to have every desire, thought, and imagination of the heart, regulated by a sense of the presence and the purity of God, and in conformity to his will. Amid much feeling of deficiency in these respects, it leads our attention to that interesting mental condition, in which there is a contest and a warfare within,—and a prevailing opposition to every thing that is at variance with the purity of a moral being. The second division includes the cul-

tivation of feelings of kindness and benevolence towards all men;—the love of justice,—the love of truth,—the love of peace,—the forgiveness of injuries,—the mortification of selfishness;—in a word, the earnest and habitual desire to promote the comfort and alleviate the distresses of others. From these two mental conditions must spring a character, distinguished alike by piety towards God, and by high integrity, benevolence, and active usefulness towards man. He who earnestly cultivates this purity within, feels that he requires continual watchfulness, and a constant direction of the mind to those truths and moral causes which are calculated to influence his volitions. He feels farther that he is in need of a might not his own in this high design; but for this he knows also he can look, with humble confidence and hope, when, under a sense of moral weakness, he asks its powerful aid.

II. A humble and dutiful submission to the appointments of Providence,—as part of a great system which is regulated by infinite wisdom. The man, who bears upon his mind this sublime impression, has learnt to contemplate the Almighty One as disposing of the events of the lower world, and assigning to each of his rational

creatures the place which he occupies. That place, whatever it may be, he perceives has attached to it special duties and responsibilities,—and calls for the cultivation of moral qualities peculiarly adapted to it. Is it one of comfort, wealth, or influence,—solemn obligations arise out of the means of usefulness which these command. Is it one of humble life, privation, or actual suffering,—each of these also has its peculiar duties, and each is to be contemplated as belonging to a great system of moral discipline, in which no part can be wanting in consistency with the harmony of the whole. Such a submission of the soul to the appointments of God does not preclude the use of all legitimate means for bettering our condition,—or for preventing or removing sources of distress. But when, under the proper use of such means, these are not removed, it leads us habitually to that higher power, to whose will all such attempts must be subservient;—and while it elevates our thoughts above present events and second causes, it reminds us of that great scheme of discipline through which we are passing, and the purposes which these events are calculated to promote in our own moral improvement. Viewed under such feelings, the ills of life lose that aspect in which we are too apt to contemplate them;—

and will be considered with new and peculiar interest, as essential to that system, the great object of which is to prepare and purify us for a higher state of being.

III. A sense of moral imperfection and guilt,— and that humility and devout self-abasement which arise out of it. This must be a prominent feeling in every one who views his own conduct, and his mental emotions, in reference to the purity of God. It naturally leads to supplication for his mercy and forgiveness; and, in the wondrous display of his character, given in the sacred writings, a provision is disclosed, in virtue of which the exercise of mercy is made consistent with the truth and justice of a moral governor. This dispensation of peace we find habitually represented as adapted to man in a state of spiritual destitution; and no mental condition is more frequently referred to, as acceptable with the Deity, than that which consists of contrition and lowliness of mind.—"Thus sayeth the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit,—to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones." With this state of mind

is very naturally associated a sense of moral weakness,—and a constant reliance on divine aid, both for direction through life, and for the culture of the moral being.

IV. It is only necessary to add,—a profound sense of gratitude and love towards the Deity as the giver of all good,—as our daily preserver and benefactor. These feelings will have a special reference to the display which he has given of his character as merciful, gracious, and slow to anger;—and to the provision which he has made for the recovery and restoration of his fallen creatures, through "God manifest in the flesh." Of this divine person, and the work which he came to accomplish, philosophy presumes not to speculate;—but we have seen the light afforded by the inductions of moral science respecting the probability of this revelation,—and its adaptation to the actual state of man in his relation to the Deity. We have seen the impression conveyed by the character of the Messiah, considered merely as matter of historical truth,—exhibiting such a pattern, as never appeared in our world, except in him, of a pure and perfect moral being. We have seen farther the incontrovertible nature of that evidence, transmitted by tes-

timony, and confirmed, as it is, in a very peculiar manner by periodical observances, on which the whole revelation is supported;—and the inductions of sound philosophy harmonize with the impressions of the man, who, feeling his own moral necessities, yields his cordial assent to this mystery of God, and seeks in its provisions his peace in the life that now is, and his hope for the life that is to come.

From the whole mental condition, thus slightly delineated, there will naturally arise a character and conduct adapted to the feelings and principles which rule within. This implies, as we have seen, a due regulation of the desires, and a habitual direction of them to objects of real and adequate importance,—a diligent cultivation and exercise of all the affections,—and a conduct distinguished, in the highest degree, by purity, integrity, veracity, and active benevolence. It implies a profound submission to the will of the Almighty, which puts to silence every murmuring or repining thought under any dispensation of his providence. It comprehends the habitual suppression of every selfish principle, and the constant aspiration after a state of moral feeling, which proposes to itself no lower standard than that

which will bear the inspection of a being of infinite purity. This character seems to correspond with that high tone of morals enjoined in the sacred writings. Its elements are defined and clear;—would we seek to estimate its sublimity and its truth, we have only to compare it with those distorted and temporizing systems which have resulted from the inventions of men. A feeling of dissatisfaction, the same in kind, though it may differ in degree, will attach to them all; and there is none in which we can confidently rest, until we rise to the sublime morality of the gospel. That great system of ethical purity comes to us under the sanction of divine revelation, and established by the miraculous evidence by which the proof of this is conveyed; but it is independent of any other support than that which it carries in itself,—consistency with the character of God,—and harmony with the best feelings of man. In yielding an absolute consent to its supreme authority, we require no external evidence. We have only to look at the record in its own majestic simplicity, tried by the highest inductions of the philosophy of the moral powers, to enable us to point to the morality of the gospel, and say with unshrinking confidence,—this is truth.

If we would seek for that, which must be of all conceivable things of the highest moment both for the peace and the improvement of the moral being, it is to be found in the habit of mind, in which there is the uniform contemplation of the divine character, with a constant reliance on the guidance of the Almighty in every action of life. "One thing," says an inspired writer, "have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple."—The man who thus cultivates the habitual impression of the divine presence lives in an atmosphere peculiarly his own. The storms which agitate the lower world may blow around or beneath, but they touch not him;—as the traveller has seen from the mountain's top the war of elements below, while he stood in unclouded sunshine. In the works, and ways, and perfections of the Eternal One, he finds a subject of exalted contemplation, in comparison with which the highest inquiries of human science sink into insignificance. It is an exercise, also, which tends at once to elevate and to purify the mind. It raises us from the minor concerns and transient interests which are so apt to occupy us,—to that wondrous field

in which "worlds on worlds compose one universe,"—and to that mind which bade them move in their appointed orbits, and maintains them all in undeviating harmony. While it thus teaches us to bend in humble adoration before a wisdom which we cannot fathom, and a power which we cannot comprehend, it directs our attention to a display of moral attributes which at once challenge our reverence and demand our imitation. By thus leading us to compare ourselves with the supreme excellence, it tends to produce profound humility, and, at the same time, that habitual aspiration after moral improvement which constitutes the highest state of man. "The proud," says an eloquent writer, "look down upon the earth, and see nothing that creeps upon its surface more noble than themselves;—the humble look upwards to their God."—This disposition of mind, so far from being opposed to the acquirements of philosophy, sits with peculiar grace upon the man, who, through the most zealous cultivation of human science, ascends to the eternal cause. The farther he advances in the wonders of nature, the higher he rises in his adoration of the power and the wisdom which guide the whole;—"Where others see a sun, he sees a Deity."—And then, in every step of life, whe-

ther of danger, distress, or difficulty, the man who cultivates this intercourse with the incomprehensible One "inquires in his temple."—He inquires for the guidance of divine wisdom, and the strength of divine aid, in his progress through the state of moral discipline;—he inquires, in a peculiar manner, for this aid in the culture of his moral being, when he views this mighty undertaking in its important reference to the life which is to come;—he inquires for a discernment of the ways of Divine Providence, as he either feels it in his own concerns, or views it in the chain of events which are going on in the world around him. He learns to trace the whole to the same unerring hand which guides the planet in its course;—and thus rests in the absolute conviction that the economy of Providence is one great and magnificent system of design, and order, and harmony. These, we repeat with confidence, are no visions of the imagination, but the sound inductions of a calm and rational philosophy. They are conclusions which compel the assent of every candid inquirer, when he follows out that investigation of mighty import,—what is God,—and what is that essence in man which he has endowed with the power of rising to himself.

To enlarge upon these important subjects would lead us away from the proper design of a work which is intended chiefly to investigate the light we derive from the phenomena of the mind itself. The points which have been stated, as arising out of the impressions of every sound understanding, challenge the assent of all who believe in a present and presiding Deity,—a being of infinite power and wisdom, and of perfect purity. With him who calls in question this sublime truth, we have no common feeling, and no mutual premises on which an argument can be founded. We must therefore leave him to sit in solitary pride, while he views the chaos which his fancy has framed,—and strives to reconcile the discordant elements of a system, in which there are effects without a cause,—and harmony without a regulating power;—and in which the mind can perceive no element of credibility, consistency, or truth.

With this slight outline, therefore, we must quit a subject of the deepest interest, but which belongs rather to the theologian than to the inquirer in mental science;—and proceed briefly to investigate the means by which the condition of the moral feelings, which has been the subject of the preceding observations, may be promoted

and cultivated as the regulating principle of the whole character. Two views may be taken of this point, which, though they harmonize with each other in practice, are to be considered, in their philosophical aspect, as distinct.

The restoration of man from a state of estrangement, anarchy, or moral death, we are taught in the sacred writings to refer to a power from without the mind,—an influence directly from God. We have seen the various considerations derived from the phenomena of the mind, and our impressions of the divine character, giving to this great doctrine a probability which claims the assent of every correct understanding. But, without in any degree losing sight of the truth and the importance of this principle, the immediate object of our attention, as a branch of mental science, is rather the process of the mind itself, by means of which a habitual influence is produced upon the whole character. This is a compound operation which may probably be analyzed in the following manner. It seems to be composed of reason,—attention,—and a modification of conception.—The province of Reason is to examine the truth of the statements or doctrines which are proposed to the mind as calculated to act upon its moral feelings;—and,

upon this being done in a correct manner, must depend the validity of the subsequent parts of the mental process.—This being premised, it is the office of Attention, aided by reason, to direct the mind assiduously to the truths, so as fully to perceive their relations and tendencies.—By the farther process, analogous to Conception, they are then placed before us in such a manner as to give them the effect of real and present existence. By these means, truths relating to things for which we have not the evidence of our senses, or referring to events which are future, but fully expected to happen, are kept before the mind, and influence the moral feelings and the character, in the same manner as if the facts believed were actually seen, or the events expected were taking place in our view. This mental operation is *Faith*;—and, for the sound exercise of it, the constituent elements now mentioned are essentially necessary. The truth must be received by the judgment upon adequate evidence; and, by the other parts of the process, it must be so kept before the mind, that it may exercise such a moral influence as might arise from the actual vision, or present existence, of the things believed.

Attention to these considerations will proba-

bly enable us to discover some of the fallacies which have obscured and bewildered this important subject. When the impression which is thus allowed to influence the mind is one which has not been received by the judgment, upon due examination, and adequate evidence of its truth, —this is enthusiasm,—not faith.—Our present course of inquiry does not lead us to treat of the notions, which have, in various individuals, been thus allowed to usurp the place of truth. To those who would preserve themselves from the influence of such, the first great inquiry, respecting their own mental impressions, ought to be,—are they facts,—and on what evidence do they rest which can satisfy a sound understanding that they are so. On the other hand is to be avoided an error, not less dangerous than the wildest fancies of the enthusiast, and not less unworthy of a regulated mind. This consists in treating real and important truths as if they were visions of the imagination, and thus dismissing them, without examination, from the influence which they ought to produce upon the moral feelings. It is singular also to remark how these two modifications of character may be traced to a condition of the reasoning powers essentially the same. The former receives a fiction of the ima-

gination and rests upon it as truth. The latter, acting upon some prejudice or mental impression which has probably no better foundation, puts away real and important truths without any examination of the evidence on which they are founded. The misapplication of the reasoning powers is the same in both.—It consists in proceeding upon a mere impression, without exercising the judgment on the question of its evidence,—or on the facts and considerations which are opposed to it. Two characters of a very opposite description thus meet in that mental condition, which draws them equally, though in different directions, astray from the truth.

When a truth has fully received the sanction of the judgment, the second office of faith is, by attention and conception, to keep it habitually before the mind, so that it may produce its proper influence upon the character. This is to live by faith;—and in this consists that operation of the great principle which effectually distinguishes it from all pretended feelings and impressions assuming its name. We speak, in common language, of a head-knowledge which does not affect the heart;—and of a man who is sound in his creed, while he shows little of its influence upon his conduct. The mental condition of such a man

presents a subject of intense interest. His alleged belief, it is probable, consists merely in words, or in arguing ingeniously on points to which he attaches no real value. These may have been impressed upon him by education;—they may constitute the creed of a party to which he has devoted himself; and he may argue in support of them with all the energy of party zeal. In the same manner, a man may contend warmly in favour of compassion whose conduct shows a cold and barren selfishness;—but this is not benevolence;—and the other is not faith. Both are empty professions of a belief in certain truths, which have never fixed themselves in the mind so as to become regulating principles or moral causes in the mental constitution. We may indeed suppose another character, slightly removed from this, in which the truths have really received the approbation of the judgment, and yet fail to produce their proper influence. This arises from distorted moral habits, and a vitiated state of the moral faculties, which have destroyed the healthy balance of the whole economy of the mind. The consequence is, that the man perceives and approves of truths, without feeling their tendencies, and without manifesting their power.

Intimately connected with this subject, also, is

a remarkable principle in our mental constitution, formerly referred to,—namely, the relation between certain facts or truths, and certain moral emotions which naturally arise from them, according to the chain of sequences which has been established in the economy of the mind. A close connexion thus exists between our intellectual habits and our moral feelings, which leads to consequences of the utmost practical moment. Though we have little immediate voluntary power over our moral emotions, we have a power over the intellectual processes with which these are associated. We can direct the mind to truths, and we can cherish trains of thought, which are calculated to produce correct moral feelings;—and we can avoid or banish mental images or trains of thought which have an opposite tendency. This is the power over the succession of our thoughts, the due exercise of which forms so important a feature of a well-regulated mind in regard to intellectual culture;—its influence upon us as moral beings is of still higher and more vital importance.

The sound exercise of that mental condition which we call Faith consists, therefore, in the reception of certain truths by the judgment,—the proper direction of the attention to their moral

tendencies,—and the habitual influence of them upon the feelings and the conduct. When the sacred writers tell us that, without faith, it is impossible to please God,—and when they speak of a man being saved by faith,—it is not to a mere admission of certain truths as a part of his creed, that they ascribe consequences so important; but to a state in which these truths are uniformly followed out to certain results which they are calculated to produce, according to the usual course of sequences in every sound mind. This principle is strikingly illustrated by one of these writers, by reference to a simple narrative. During the invasion of Canaan by the armies of Israel, two men were sent forward as spies to bring a report concerning the city of Jericho. The persons engaged in this mission were received in a friendly manner by a woman whose house was upon the wall of the city;—when their presence was discovered, she hid them from their pursuers; and finally enabled them to escape by letting them down by a cord from a window. Before taking leave of them, she expressed her firm conviction, that the army to which they belonged was soon to take possession of Jericho, and of the whole country; and she made them swear to her, that, when this should take place, they would show

mercy to her father's house. The engagement was faithfully fulfilled. When the city was taken, and the other inhabitants destroyed, the woman was preserved, with all her kindred. In this very simple occurrence, the woman is represented, by the sacred writer, as having been saved by faith. The object of her faith was the event which she confidently expected,—that the city of Jericho was to be destroyed. The ground of her faith was the rapid manner in which the most powerful nations had already fallen before the armies of Israel,—led, as she believed, by a divine power. Acting upon this conviction, in the manner in which a belief so deeply affecting her personal safety was likely to influence any sound mind, she took means for her preservation, by making friends of the spies. Her faith saved her, because without it she would not have made this provision; but, unless she had followed out her belief to the measure which was calculated to effect this object, the mere belief of the event would have availed her nothing. When we therefore ascribe important results to faith, or to any other mental operation, we ascribe them not to the operation itself, but to this followed out to the consequences which it naturally produces according to the constitution of the human mind. In the

same manner, we may speak of one man, in a certain state of danger or difficulty, being saved by his wisdom, and another by his strength. In doing so, we ascribe such results, not to the mere possession of these qualities,—but to the efforts which naturally arose from them in the circumstances in which the individual was placed. And, when the inspired writer says, that without faith it is impossible to please God,—he certainly refers to no mere mental impression, and to no barren system of opinions;—but to the reception of certain truths, which, in our present state of being, are entirely the objects of faith, and to all that influence upon the moral feelings and the character which these must produce upon every mind that really believes them.

On this great subject, much misconception appears to have arisen from not sufficiently attending to the condition, in which, as moral beings, we are placed in the present state of existence, and the important part which must be performed by the mental exercise called faith. As physical and intellectual beings, we have certain relations to the objects by which we are surrounded, and with these we communicate by means of our bodily senses. But, as moral beings, our relations

are entirely of a different nature; and the facts and motives which are calculated to act upon us in these relations are chiefly the objects of faith; that is, they are not cognizable by any of our senses, but are to be received by a different part of our constitution, and upon a separate kind of evidence. This, accordingly, is the simple, but important distinction referred to by the sacred writer, when, in allusion to our condition as moral beings, he says,—"we walk by faith, not by sight." The objects of sight, here intended to express all the objects of sense, exercise over us a habitual and powerful influence. They constantly obtrude themselves upon our notice without any exertion of our own; and it requires a peculiar exercise of mind to withdraw our attention from them, and to feel the power of events which are future, and of things which are not seen. This mental exercise is Faith. Its special province, as we have seen, is to receive truths which are presented directly to the mind,—to place them before us with all the vividness of actual and present existence,—and to make them exert upon us an agency analogous to that which is produced by objects of sight. The next great point in our inquiry, therefore, is, what are the truths which are calculated thus to operate upon us as moral

Christianity,—taken along with the conviction, which every man receives of his actual moral condition, from the voice of conscience within. The sincerity of the offer we derive from our impression of the unchangeable attributes of the Deity. Accordingly, he who believes is said to give glory to God,—that is, to receive his statements with absolute confidence, and to form an honourable conception of the sincerity of his intentions. He who believes not, rejects the statements of the Almighty as false,—and treats him with the contempt which we apply to one whom we suppose to promise what he has no intention to bestow. The man who comes to God with the hope of acceptance is therefore required to come in the assurance of faith,—or an implicit conviction that he is sincere in his intentions of bestowing the blessings which he offers;—and whosoever hath not this assurance does dishonour to the divine character,—or "maketh God a liar."

It were vain to enter upon the various systems and opinions, in which this important doctrine has been misrepresented by its enemies, and often perverted by those who profess to be its friends. Two of these may be briefly noticed. Some have maintained that the doctrine of an unconditional pardon sets aside the obligations of

morality,—because it has no regard to the personal character of the individual,—or holds out the offer of acceptance to faith, without obedience. Others contend that an essential part of faith is an immediate and absolute assurance of a man's own acceptance in the sight of the Deity;—and that he who has not this is in a state of unbelief. These two opinions, so different from each other, are equally founded upon misconception of the nature and provisions of the Christian economy.

In regard to the former, it is only necessary to remark, that the revelation of Christian truth is not confined to an offer of pardon to the guilty;—its great object is the recovery and purification of the moral being; and there is an essential and inviolable union between these two parts of the great scheme of redemption. It provides in the most effectual manner for the interests of morality, by the purification of the desires and affections, the springs of action;—it is the morality of the heart. It proclaims a system of morals more pure and more exalted far than ever was contemplated by the wisest of men;—it exhibits an example of the perfect state of a moral being, in the character of the Messiah;—and enforces the imitation of this example as

beings, and which it is the object of faith to bring habitually before us.

When we withdraw our minds from the influence of sensible things, and send forth our attention to those truths which are the province of faith, the first great object which meets our view is the eternal incomprehensible One, the moral governor of the universe,—a being of infinite perfections and infinite purity. From the stupendous works of nature, we trace his operation as the great First Cause,—and infer, with absolute certainty, his boundless power and wisdom, and his independent existence. The impress of his moral attributes he has fixed with indelible certainty upon our moral perceptions,—where, in the light of conscience, co-operating with a simple process of reason, we perceive him to be a being of infinite holiness, and of unerring truth and justice. Our knowledge of these attributes is not the result of any process of reasoning which can admit of deliberation or doubt. They force themselves upon our conviction by the most simple principles of induction, when, from our own mental and moral endowments, we infer the perfections of him who formed us.

From every conception we can form of such a

being, we have an equally insuperable conviction of his universal presence,—that he is the witness not only of our conduct, but of the thoughts and imaginations of the heart;—and that from these, as indicating our real condition, and not from our conduct alone, our moral aspect is estimated by him,—the pure and holy One who seeth in secret. Each moment, as it passes rapidly over us, we know is bringing us nearer to that period when all our hopes and fears for this world shall lie with us in the grave. But we feel also that this is the entrance to another state of being,—a state of moral retribution, where the eternal One is to be disclosed in all his attributes as a moral governor. These considerations fix themselves upon the mind, with a feeling of yet new and more tremendous interest, when we farther take into view that this future existence stretches out before us into endless duration. This is the truth so powerfully expressed by the sacred writer, in terms which by their brevity convey, in the most adequate manner, their overwhelming import,—"The things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal."

These truths are not the visions of enthusiasm; neither are they the result of any process of reasoning, by which different men may arrive at dif-

ferent conclusions. They force themselves upon our conviction with a power which we cannot put away from us, when we turn our attention to the solemn inquiry, what we are, and what is God. In the sacred writings they are detailed and illustrated, in a connected and harmonious manner; and are impressed upon us with the force of a revelation from the Deity himself.—But the principles there disclosed meet with an impression in our moral constitution which pleads with authority for their truth. It is the province of faith to keep these habitually before the mind, and to cause them to influence the feelings and the conduct as if they were objects of sense,—as if the Deity in all the purity of his character were actually disclosed to our view,—or as if we were present at that dread hour which shall witness his righteous retribution. The man, who thus feels their power, and exhibits their influence upon his character, is he who lives by faith.

When, under this mental exercise, a man brings himself into the immediate presence of the Eternal One;—when he arraigns himself, as it were, before the bar of the omniscient judge;—when he places before him that future state which stretches forth into endless existence,—a train of feelings must arise in his mind, to which he

was a stranger, so long as he placidly resigned himself to the influence of sensible things. He views this being of infinite purity as one who has been all his life the daily witness of his conduct;—and feels that even the secrets of the heart have been at all times open to divine inspection. Each day, as it passed unheeded over him, was a portion gone by of his period of moral discipline; and each, as it glided amid the frivolities of life, or the active pursuit of temporal good, had its moral aspect assigned to it in the judgment of the Eternal mind. Along with these impressions, which no reflecting man can put away from him, a voice within forces upon him the conviction,—that, were his whole history disclosed to his fellow-men, he would, even in their estimation, be found wanting. How much more deeply must this be fixed upon his inmost soul, when he feels that the whole is, at one glance, exposed to the eye of omniscience; —and that an hour is rapidly approaching, when a strict account must be rendered, and a righteous sentence pronounced, the result of which will extend into eternal existence. With these truths upon his mind, what reflecting man can view without awe the moment which is to close his state of moral discipline,—when, disencum-

bered from his earthly tenement, he shall find himself alone with God,—and there shall burst upon his astonished faculties the blaze of an endless day. These are not speculations of fancy, but eternal truth. The man, who habitually acts under their influence, knows that his faith rests upon a conviction which cannot be shaken, when he recognises in all his ways the presence and the inspection of the Deity,—when he feels the obligation to have oven the desires and affections under subjection to his will,—and when he resigns himself to his guidance and asks his powerful aid, both for the conduct of this life, and the preparation for the life which is to come.

Solemn is the hour when a man thus retires from the tumult of life, and seriously proposes to himself the question,—what is his condition as a moral being; what have been his leading pursuits in that life which is hastening to a close;—what is his aspect in the view of that incomprehensible One, who perceives at a single glance the whole details of his moral history.—Is he safe to meet the full splendour of that eye;—has he no apprehension, that, when called to account in the immediate presence of unerring purity, he may not be able to answer.—The man

lives not who can appeal to his own heart and say, after serious inquiry, that he can thus meet the penetrating search of him, whose knowledge is perfect, as his purity is infinite: The man lives not, who can look back upon his whole life, without feeling, that, in the sight of this unspotted One, he is polluted with guilt: And, if his heart condemn him, with all its partiality for his own views and feelings, and all its forgetfulness of many points in his moral history, he must feel that God is greater than his heart, and knoweth all things. Under such an impression, to what refuge shall he betake himself. Does he appeal to an indefinite idea of the mercy of the Deity;—it must be evident that this conveys no distinct principle, and will not bear the confidence which is essential to hope and peace. For we cannot go to the extent of supposing a mercy so indiscriminate, that the Deity will depart from all the laws which he has made, and which he has impressed upon us as a part of our moral constitution. This would be ascribing to infinite wisdom, an indecision and a change of purpose, unworthy of the weakest human lawgiver. If, then, we do not boldly assume this position, how are we to draw the line where such mercy is to terminate;—and where the Almighty is to ap-

pear in his character of justice, as a righteous moral governor. If we find that each individual fixes a different standard,—and that each extends it so as to favour his own condition, it is clear that the system presents no character of truth, and that it is incapable of ministering to the consolation of him who feels his own necessities, and seriously contemplates the character of God. He must perceive that to apply such reasoning to human enactments would be to represent them as a mockery of justice; and that it is impossible thus to argue respecting the laws of him who is infinite in holiness and boundless in wisdom. He cannot but acknowledge that a universe governed in such a manner would run into irremediable confusion and anarchy; and will find it impossible, on any principle which human reasoning can furnish, to arrive at any other decision than this,—that the Judge of all the earth must be unchanging in his purposes, and impartial in his justice.

To this conclusion we are led by the clearest inductions of moral science;—but, at this momentous point, philosophy fails us. No human power can find a refuge to which the mind can betake itself under a sense of guilt;—no human wisdom can answer the inquiry of mighty import,

can God be just and yet justify the ungodly. But here we are met by a light from heaven which has burst upon the scene of doubt and of darkness; and are called to bring down the pride of our reason in humble submission to the testimony of God. It comes supported by a weight of evidence, which challenges the cordial assent of the most acute understanding, and the power of which will be best appreciated by those who, with sincere desire for truth, have made the highest attainments in the laws of rigid inquiry. It discloses an atonement made for sin, and an influence from heaven calculated to restore the moral being to the purity in which it was formed. It thus meets alike the necessities of man,—as in a state of actual guilt,—and a state of moral degradation. For the one, it displays a scheme of mercy in which the integrity of the divine character is vindicated, while pardon is extended to transgressors. To the other it offers power from heaven, which will correct the disorders of the moral constitution, and raise the man anew to the likeness of God. It thus forms a harmonious whole, uniform and consistent in itself;—worthy of the character of God,—and adapted to the condition of man; and to every one who feels his own moral necessities, and estimates the pu-

rity of the Deity, it brings an absolute conviction of its truth.

A participation in the benefits of this revelation of divine mercy is said, in the sacred writings, to be received by Faith; and this expression has given rise to controversies and contending systems, which have involved the subject in much perplexity. While some have restricted the operation of Faith to the mere belief of a certain system of opinions, others have referred to it a series of mysterious impressions, and enthusiastic feelings, at variance with every dictate of sound reasoning. The principle of faith, however, holds so prominent a place in the scheme of Christian truth, that some clear notions respecting its nature must be felt to be of the highest interest. It holds also, as we have formerly seen, a most important position in the philosophy of the moral feelings,—being that mental operation by which we receive a certain class of truths of the utmost consequence to us as responsible beings. It is a process which every one feels, but which cannot be defined;—and it can be illustrated only by tracing its influence, in regard to those objects to which it is more particularly directed.

The objects of faith are twofold,—truths addressed to our understanding,—and benefits of-

fered or promised. We have formerly had occasion to trace the action of faith in regard to truth,—especially a class of truths which are calculated, when really believed, to exert a powerful effect upon our moral feelings and conduct. Its operation, we have seen, is to bring these truths before us in such a manner, that they exert the same kind of influence as if the facts or events were objects of sense. The man who believes these truths, so as thus habitually to feel their power, is he who receives them in faith. This is the province of faith in regard to truth;—we have next to analyze its operation in regard to offered or promised benefits,—and this we can best do by means of an example..

Let us take the illustration of a man affected with a disease supposed to be mortal;—he is told that a remedy has been discovered of infallible efficacy;—and that a person is at hand who is ready to administer it. Does he perceive his danger;—does he believe the virtue of the remedy;—does he confide in the sincerity of the individual who offers it;—this is faith. The immediate and natural result of his faith is, that he asks for the remedy which is offered;—and this result is inseparable from such belief, according to the uniform sequence of volitions in every

sound mind. The man who professes to admit the facts, and does not show such a result of belief, professes what he does not actually feel. If he perceives not the extent of his danger, he asks not the remedy, because he values it not;—and the same effect may follow, if he doubts either its efficacy, or the sincerity of him who offers it. In this case, it is also to be observed, that a reflection is thrown upon the character of this individual, by imputing to him an offer of what he has either not the power or the intention to perform. But if the man really believes the truths, he applies for the remedy;—and he receives it. Thus his faith saves him;—because by means of it he sought the offered aid. Could we suppose him merely to admit the facts, without asking the remedy, his belief would avail him nothing.

Such appears to be the simple view we are to take of Faith, when we apply it to the great benefits which are presented to us in the Christian revelation. This is addressed to us as beings in a state both of guilt and of depravity;—and as having no means of our own by which we can rescue ourselves from condemnation and impurity. It unfolds a dispensation of peace, by which, in perfect consistency with the harmony

of his character, the Deity offers mercy and forgiveness,—and an influence from himself which has power to purify the moral being. These benefits are conferred on every one who believes: —the man who is convinced of his guilt, and perceives his impurity;—who feels his inability to rescue himself;—who admits the efficacy of the remedy, and confides in the sincerity with which it is offered;—this is he who believes. His faith saves him;—because, acting on his conviction, according to the uniform sequence of volitions in every sound mind,—he asks the promised aid,—and asking receives it. Much of the confusion in which the subject has been involved appears to have arisen from metaphysical refinements in which the various parts of this mental process are separated from each other. They form one harmonious whole, which cannot be broken. The man will not seek the remedy, who believes not its efficacy, and perceives not his moral necessities,—but, however he may profess to admit these facts, if he follows not out his belief to its natural result in applying for the remedy, his mere belief will not profit him.—The grounds, on which these truths are addressed to us, are contained in that chain of evidence on which is founded the whole system of

indispensable in every one who professes to be his disciple. These different parts of the scheme can never be separated, and there cannot be a greater perversion of reasoning, or a greater misconception of the prominent features of the gospel of peace, than to allege that it does not provide, in the most effectual manner, for the highest interests of morality.

The other opinion is equally founded upon error,—namely, that which considers it essential to faith, that a man be assured of his personal acceptance in the sight of the Deity. It is obvious that this is a sophism clearly opposed to sound reasoning, and to the first principles of the philosophy of the moral feelings. For faith, viewed as a mental process, must always have for its object facts; and these facts must rest upon such evidence as is sufficient to convince the understanding of their truth.—To talk of faith, without such facts and such evidence, is a mere logical fallacy, or an absurdity in terms. But there is no disclosure of the personal acceptance of any individual, and, consequently, on no principle of sound reasoning can this ever be considered as the object of faith.—This doctrine, therefore, is applying a most important principle of the mind, not to facts, which alone can warrant the exercise

of faith, but to a vision of the imagination, which admits of no evidence, and cannot be subjected to any test of its truth.

Widely different from all such flimsy and imaginary hypotheses, is the great system of Christian truth,—harmonious and consistent in itself,—and challenging the approbation of the soundest understanding. It reveals, as we have seen, a dispensation of mercy, in accordance with the highest ideas we can form of the divine perfections. It is supported by a chain of evidence which carries conviction to the mind of the most rigid inquirer;—and thus it is a sound and legitimate object of faith. It reveals also a provision for purifying the moral nature; and this in every case accompanies the dispensation of mercy to those who receive it. The effects of this powerful agency, therefore, become the test and the evidence of the reality of faith. Does a man seek a proof of his acceptance,—the reference is to facts in his own moral condition. He is to look for it in a change which is taking place in his character,—a new direction of his desires,—a new regulation of his affections,—a habitual impression, to which he was a stranger before, of the presence and the perfections of the Deity,—and a new light which has burst upon his view, respecting his relations

to this life and to that which is to come. He is to seek this evidence in a mind, which aims at no lower standard than that which will bear the constant inspection of infinite purity;—he is to seek it, and to manifest it to others, in a spirit which takes no lower pattern than that model of perfection,—the character of the Messiah. These acquirements, indeed, are looked upon, not as a ground of acceptance, but a test of moral condition;—not as, in any degree, usurping the place of the great principle of faith, but as its fruits and evidences. As these, then, are the only proofs of the reality of this principle, so they are the only basis on which a man can rest any sound conviction of his moral aspect in the sight of the Deity;—and that system is founded on delusion and falsehood, which, in this respect, holds out any other ground of confidence than the purification of the heart,—and a corresponding harmony of the whole character. Such attainment, indeed, is [illegible] made at once, nor is it ever made in a full and perfect manner in the present state of being; but [illegible] the great principle has been fixed within, [illegible] persevering effort, and a uniform contest, and a continual aspiration after conformity to the great model of perfection. Each step that a man gains in this progress serves to

extend his view of the high pattern to which his eye is steadily directed; and as his knowledge of it is thus enlarged, he is led by comparison to feel more and more deeply his own deficiency. It thus produces increasing humility, and an increasing sense of his own imperfection; and causes him continually to feel that, in this warfare, he requires a power which is not in himself. But he knows also that this is provided as an essential part of the great system on which his hope is established. Amid much weakness, therefore, and many infirmities, his moral improvement goes forward. Faint and feeble at first, as the earliest dawn of the morning, it becomes brighter and steadier as it proceeds in its course, and, "as the shining light, shineth more and more unto the perfect day."